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# PIERRE AND JEAN

WITH A PREFACE BY THE AUTHOR

GUY DE MAUPASSANT

TRANSLATED BY  
HUGH CRAIG

AND ILLUSTRATED BY  
ERNEST DUEZ AND ALBERT LYNCH



NEW YORK  
GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS, LIMITED  
119 AND 121 WEST 23D STREET



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GUY DE MAUPASSANT

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GEORGE ROUTLEDGE & SONS, LIMITED

NEW YORK: 9 LAFAYETTE PLACE  
LONDON, GLASGOW AND MANCHESTER

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Press of J. J. Little & Co.,  
Astor Place, New York.

712  
3247  
761E  
1872

## “THE NOVEL.”

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I HAVE no intention of pleading here the cause of the following little novel. On the contrary, the ideas which I shall attempt to elucidate would involve rather a criticism of the style of psychological study which I have undertaken in “Pierre and Jean.”

I wish to discuss the novel in general.

I am not the only one to whom the same reproach is addressed by the same critics every time that a new book appears.



In the midst of eulogistic phrases I regularly find the following, by the same pens :

“The greatest defect of this work is that it is not a novel, properly speaking.”

One could reply by the same argument :

“The greatest defect of the writer, who does me the honor to sit in judgment on my work, is that he is not a critic.”

What, in fact, are the essential characteristics of a critic ?

He must, without partisanship, without preconceived opinions, without the ideas of any school, without any connection with any clique of artists—he must comprehend, distinguish, and explain the most opposite tendencies and the most contrary temperaments, and accept artistic essays of the most diverse forms.

The critic who, after *Manon Lescaut*, *Paul and Virginia*, *Don Quixote*, *Les Liaisons Dangereuses*, *Werther*, the *Elective Affinities*, *Clarissa Harlowe*, *Émile*, *Candide*, *Cinq-Mars*,

*René*, the *Three Musketeers*, *Mauprat*, *Le Père Goriot*, *Cousine Bette*, *Colombe*, *Le Rouge et le Noir*, *Mademoiselle de Maupin*, *Notre Dame de Paris*, *Salambô*, *Madame Bovary*, *Adolphe*, *M. de Camors*, *L'Assommoir*, *Sapho*, etc., still dares to write, "This is a novel and this is not," seems to me endowed with a perspicacity which is very much like incompetence.

Such a critic usually understands by a novel an adventure more or less probable, arranged like a dramatic piece in three acts: the first containing the exposition, the second the action, and the last the denouement.

This manner of composing a novel is certainly admissible on condition that we accept all the others equally.

Do there exist rules for writing a novel, outside of which a written narrative ought to bear another name?

If *Don Quixote* is a novel, is *Le Rouge et le Noir* another? If *Monte Cristo* is one, is

*L'Assommoir* another? Can any comparison be established between the *Elective Affinities* of Goethe, the *Three Musketeers* of Dumas, *Madame Bovary* by Flaubert, *M. de Camors* by Octave Feuillet, and the *Germinal* of Zola? Which of these works is a novel? Where are the famous rules? Where did they come from? Who established them? In virtue of what principle, what authority, what course of reasoning, do they exist?

It seems, however, that our critics know, in some certain, indubitable fashion, what constitutes a novel, and what distinguishes it from another which is not one. This simply means that, without being producers, they are enlisted in a certain school, and reject, just like the novelists themselves, all works conceived and executed outside of their system of æsthetics.

An intelligent critic, on the contrary, ought to seek for everything which does not in the least resemble novels already written, and to

urge, as much as possible, young authors to attempt new paths.

All writers, Victor Hugo as well as Zola, have persistently claimed the absolute, indisputable right of composing ; that is, of imagining or observing, according to their personal conception of art. Talent comes from originality, which is a special manner of thinking, seeing, understanding, and judging. Now, the critic who assumes to define the "Novel" according to the ideas he has formed from the novels he likes, and to lay down certain invariable rules of composition, will always be hostile to the genius of the artist who introduces a new manner. A critic who would really merit the name ought to be nothing but an analyst, without bias, without preferences, without passions ; and he ought, like a judge of paintings, only to take account of the artistic value of the object of art submitted to him. His comprehension ought to be all-embracing, and ought to absorb so com-

pletely his personality that he can praise and commend the very books which, as a man, he does not like, and which, as a judge, he must take note of.

Most critics, however, are merely readers ; and the result is that they nearly always find fault with us on false grounds, or compliment us without reserve or measure.

The reader who seeks in a book merely to satisfy the natural bent of his mind demands that the writer shall minister to his predominant taste ; and he invariably describes as remarkable or "well written" the work or the passage which pleases his imagination, be it idealistic, gay, loose, sad, dreamy, or positive.

In brief, the public is composed of numerous groups, that cry out to us :

"Comfort me."

"Amuse me."

"Touch my sympathies."

"Make me sad."



"Make me dream."

"Make me laugh."

"Make me shiver."

"Make me weep."

"Make me think."

Some chosen spirits alone ask of the artist :

"Make something beautiful, in the form which suits you best according to your temperament."

The artist essays, succeeds or fails. The critic ought to judge of the result only by the nature of the effort : he has no right to take account of tendencies.

This has been written a thousand times already, but it will be always necessary to repeat it.

Thus, after the literary schools, which have sought to give us a deformed, superhuman, poetic, tender, charming, or superb vision of life, there has come a realistic or naturalistic school, which professes to show us the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth.

These different schools of art must be accepted with equal interest, and the works that they produce must be judged solely from the point of view of their artistic value, admitting *à priori* the general ideas which give birth to them.

To deny the right of a writer to compose a poetic work or a realistic work, is to seek to force him to modify his temperament, to reject his originality, and not to make use of the eye and the intelligence which Nature has bestowed on him.

To reproach him for seeing beautiful or hideous things, small or epic things, gracious or displeasing things, is to reproach him with being formed in such or such a manner, and with not having a power of vision that agrees with ours.

Let us leave him free to comprehend, to observe, to conceive, as he pleases, provided he be an artist. Let us rise to the heights of poetry when we judge an idealist, and prove

that his dream is commonplace, vulgar, not mad enough or magnificent enough. But if we judge a naturalist, let us show him wherein truth in life differs from truth in his book.

It is evident that schools that differ so widely must employ absolutely opposite methods of composition.

The novelist who takes the brutal, unpleasant, unchanging truth, and strives to draw from it some exciting and exceptional adventure, ought, without any exaggerated regard for probability, to manipulate events at his pleasure, and prepare and arrange them to arouse the reader's pleasure, emotion, or sympathy. The plan of his novel is a mere series of ingenious combinations skilfully leading to the denouement. The incidents are disposed and graduated to the culminating point and final effect, which is a decisive, dominant event, satisfying all the curiosity awaked at the opening, barring any further interest, and terminating so completely the

story told that we no longer desire to know what will happen to-morrow to the personages in whom we have been most wrapped up.

The novelist, on the other hand, who professes to give us an exact image of life, ought carefully to avoid every concatenation of events that seems exceptional. His object is not to tell a story, to amuse us, to touch our pity, but to force us to think and understand the deep, hidden sense of events. Through having seen and meditated, he regards the universe, things, facts, and men in a certain fashion which is peculiar to him, and which results from the entire assemblage of his observations and reflections thereon. He seeks to impart to us this personal vision of the world by reproducing it in his book. In order to move us as he himself has been moved by the spectacle of life, he must reproduce it before our eyes with scrupulous accuracy. He will have then to compose his work in such a skilful manner, and with such

concealment of his manner, and with such simplicity in appearance, that it is impossible to perceive or indicate his plan or discover his intentions.

In place of plotting out an adventure, and developing it in a manner to render it interesting down to the denouement, he will introduce his personage or personages at a certain period of their lives, and conduct them, by natural transitions, down to the following period. In this wise he will show, at times, how the spirit is modified under the influence of surrounding circumstances ; at times, how the sentiments and the passions are developed ; how we love, hate, combat in all social environments ; how the interests of the tradesman, the interests of money, the interests of family, and political interests struggle with one another.

The skilful execution of his plan, then, will not consist in emotion or charm, in a fascinating beginning or a moving catastrophe, but



in the adroit grouping of little constant facts from which the definitive meaning of the work will disengage itself. If he comprises in three hundred pages ten years of a life for the purpose of showing what it was, in the midst of all the beings which surrounded it, in all its peculiar and characteristic signification, he ought to know how to eliminate, among the innumerable little daily events, all those which are useless to him, and to place in a strong and distinct light all those which would have remained unperceived for observers less clear-sighted, and which give his book its power and its value as a whole.

It is seen that such a manner of composing, so different from the ancient method open to every eye, often throws the critics off the track, and that they do not discover the fine, secret, almost invisible thread employed by certain modern artists in place of the single string which was called "plot."

In brief, if the novelist of yesterday selected

and related the crises of life, and poignant states of soul and heart, the novelist of to-day writes the history of the heart, the soul, and the intellect in their normal conditions. To produce the effect he aims at, that is, the feeling of simple reality, and to bring out the artistic lesson which he is about to draw from it, that is, the revelation of what is truly the contemporary man before his eyes—he must employ only facts of incontestable and unswerving truth. But, if we place ourselves at the very point of view of these realistic artists, we must discuss and contest their theory, which seems to admit of being summed up in these words, "The whole truth, and nothing but the truth."

Their intention being to bring out the philosophy of certain constant, current facts, they must often correct and change events to the profit of probability and the detriment of truth, for

*"Le vrai peut quelquefois n'être pas vraisemblable."*

The realist, if he is an artist, will seek, not to show us a vulgar photograph of life, but to give us a more complete, striking, and probable vision of life than the reality itself.

It would be impossible to recount everything, for it would require a volume at least every day to enumerate the multitude of insignificant incidents that fill up our existence.

Some selection is therefore imposed on the writer, and this is the first blow at the theory of the "whole truth."

Life, besides, is composed of the most different, most unforeseen, most contrary, and most disparate things ; it is headstrong, without sequence or connection, full of inexplicable, illogical, and contradictory catastrophes which ought to be classed under the heading "Current Events."

This is the reason why the artist, having chosen his theme, will not take, in this life, encumbered as it is with chances and fatali-

ties, anything but the characteristic details useful to his subject, and he will fling all the rest to one side.

One example out of a thousand: The number of people who die every day in this world by accident is considerable. But can we make a tile fall on the head of a principal personage, or throw him under the wheels of a carriage, in the middle of a story, under the pretext that it is necessary to introduce an accident?

Life, again, leaves everything on the same plane, and precipitates facts or drags them out indefinitely. Art, on the contrary, consists in using precautions and preparations, in managing unobtrusive and clever transitions, in placing in full light, by simple skill in composition, the essential events, and in giving to all the others the degree of relief that suits them according to their importance, in order to produce a profound sensation of the special truth which it is sought to display.

To write the truth, then, consists in presenting a complete illusion of the truth, following the ordinary logic of facts, and not in transcribing them pell-mell in the order of their successive occurrence.

Hence, I conclude that the Realists of talent ought rather to call themselves the Illusionists.

What child's play, too, to believe in Reality when we each carry our own reality in our thoughts and our organs ! Our eyes, our ears, our sense of smell, our taste, are all different, and create as many verities as there are men on the earth. And our spirits, receiving their information from these organs, are diversely impressed, and understand, analyze, and judge as if each of us belonged to a different race.

Each of us, then, simply creates for himself an illusionary picture of the world—illusions poetic, sentimental, joyful, melancholy, foul, or lugubrious, according to his nature. And the writer has no other mission beyond repro-



ducing faithfully this illusion, with all the artistic processes which he has learned and of which he can dispose.

Illusion of the beautiful, a mere human convention ! Illusion of the disagreeable, a changing opinion ! Illusion of the true, never immutable ! Illusion of the ignoble, so attractive to many ! Great artists are those who impose on mankind their particular illusions !

Let us not, then, lose our tempers about any theory, since each of them is simply the generalized expression of an analyzing temperament.

Two theories, above all, have been often discussed, and have been opposed to each other instead of both one and other being admitted ; these are the theories of the analytic romance and the objective romance. The partisans of analysis demand that the writer shall strive to indicate the slightest evolutions of a soul, and all the most secret

motives which determine our actions, while they allow only a very secondary importance to the resulting fact. That is merely a point that is reached, a simple limit, the pretext for a novel. It would be necessary, then, according to them, to write these works, whether precise or fanciful, in which imagination is confounded with observation, after the manner of a philosopher composing a book on psychology—to lay bare causes by tracing them to their most distant sources, to tell all the whys of all resolves, and to clearly discern all the struggles of a soul acting under the impulse of interest, passion, or instinct.

The partisans of objectivity (what a vile word!) profess, on the contrary, to give us an exact representation of what takes place in life; they avoid carefully all complicated explanations, and all dissertations on motives, and limit themselves to placing before our eyes personages and events.

In their view, psychology ought to be hid-

den in a book, as it is hidden in reality under the facts of existence.

Novels conceived on this plan gain thereby interest, movement in narrative, color, and bustling life.

In place, then, of explaining at length the state of mind of a personage, objective authors seek for the action or the gesture to which this state of mind would inevitably lead the man in a certain determinate situation. And they make him conduct himself in such a manner, from one end of the volume to the other, that all his acts and movements are the reflection of his inmost nature, of all his thoughts, all his resolves, or all his hesitations. They hide their psychology instead of displaying it; they make it the framework of the book, as the invisible bony system is the frame of the human body. The painter who paints our portrait does not show our skeleton.

It seems to me that a novel thus executed gains likewise in sincerity. In the first place,

it is nearer the truth, for the people we see in action around us do not relate to us the motives they obey.

We must, in the next place, take this into account, that if, by means of observation, we can determine the nature of men so exactly as to foresee their course of conduct in almost all circumstances—that is, if we can say with precision, “Such a man of such a temperament, in such a case, will do this”—it does not follow that we are able to determine, one by one, all the secret evolutions of his mind, which is not ours ; all the mysterious temptations of his instincts, which do not resemble ours ; nor all the confused proclivities of his nature, of which the organs, nerves, blood, and flesh are different from ours.

Whatever be the genius of a feeble, gentle, passionless man, loving solely science and work, he will never be able to transport himself so completely into the body and soul of a man with an exuberant, sensual, and violent

nature, agitated by every desire and even by every vice, as to comprehend and describe the inmost impulses and sensations of such a different being, even when he can clearly foresee and narrate all the acts of his life.

In brief, the author who produces a work of pure psychology can only substitute himself in the place of all his personages in the different situations where he places them; for it is impossible for him to change his organs, which are the sole intermediaries between exterior life and ourselves, which force on us their perceptions, determine our sensibility, and create in us a soul essentially different from all those which surround us. Our view, and our knowledge of the world acquired by the aid of our senses, and our ideas about life cannot be partially transferred by us into all the personages whose inmost, unknown being we claim to be unveiling. It is always ourselves whom we exhibit in the form of a king, a murderer, a thief, or an honest man, of a

courtesan, a nun, a young girl, or a market-woman ; for we are obliged to state the problem to ourselves in these terms : “ If *I* were king, murderer, thief, courtesan, nun, young girl, or market-woman, what would *I* do ? What would *I* think ? How would *I* act ? ” We can, then, only diversify our personages by changing the age, sex, social position, and all the circumstances of the life of our *I*, which nature has surrounded with an impregnable barrier of organs.

Skill consists in not letting the reader recognize this our *I*, under all the different masks which serve to hide it.

But if, from the sole point of view of complete accuracy, purely psychological analysis is open to question, it can, nevertheless, give us as noble works of art as all the other methods of working.

To-day we have the Symbolists. Why not ? Their dream as artists is one to be respected ; and they offer this particular

interest, that they know and proclaim the extreme difficulty of art.

In fact, one must be very mad, very daring, very conceited, or very stupid to write anything nowadays ! After so many masters of such varied dispositions, of such manifold genius, what remains to be done that has not been done, what can be said that has not been said ? Who among us can boast of having written a page or a phrase which cannot be found, almost identically, somewhere ? When we who are so saturated with French writings that our whole body gives us the impression of being kneaded up with phrases, take up a book, do we ever find a line or thought which is not familiar, or of which we have not had at least a confused presentiment ?

The man who seeks only to amuse his public by means already known writes with confidence, in the candor of his mediocrity, works destined to the ignorant, unoccupied

crowd. But those on whom all the ages of past literature weigh heavily ; those whom nothing satisfies, whom everything disgusts because it does not come up to their dreams ; those to whom every flower seems to have been plucked, to whom their work always gives the impression of a useless and common labor—they arrive at the opinion that literary art is an inconceivable, mysterious thing, which some pages of the greatest masters but slightly reveal to us.

Twenty verses, twenty phrases, read together, thrill us to the heart as a surprising revelation ; but the following verses resemble all verses, and the prose that comes next resembles all pieces of prose.

Men of genius, beyond doubt, have not this anguish and torture, because they bear in themselves an irresistible creative force. They do not sit in judgment on themselves. The rest of us, who are simply conscientious and persistent workers, cannot struggle



against invincible discouragement, except by continuity of effort.

Two men, by their simple and luminous teachings, gave me this force of persistent effort—Louis Bouilhet and Gustave Flaubert.

If I speak of them and myself in this place, it is because their advice, summed up in a few lines, will be useful, perhaps, to some young writers less confident in themselves than one is ordinarily when we make our *début* in literature.

Bouilhet, who was the first with whom I formed a rather intimate acquaintance, about two years before I gained the friendship of Flaubert, by dint of repeating to me that a hundred verses or even less insured the reputation of an artist, if they were faultless, and if they embodied the essence of the talent and originality of a man even of the second order, made me understand that on some day of lucidity, power, and enthusiasm, by happily meeting with a subject thoroughly

in harmony with all the tendencies of our spirit, continual labor and thorough knowledge of one's trade would make such a work start into life—a work short, unique, and as perfect as we can make it.

I perceived in the next place that the best-known writers have almost never left more than one volume ; and that, before all things, it is necessary to have the opportunity of finding and discovering, in the midst of the multiplicity of matters presented to our choice, that which will absorb all our faculties, all our work, all our artistic power.

Later on, Flaubert, whom I sometimes saw, conceived a liking for me. I ventured to submit to him some of my attempts. He kindly read them, and replied, “I do not know if you have talent ; what you have shown me proves that you possess a certain degree of intelligence. But do not forget this, young man, that talent—to quote the saying

of Buffon—is merely long patience. Keep on working."

I did so, and often revisited him, as I perceived that he liked me, for he laughingly used to call me his disciple.

For seven years I wrote verses, I wrote stories, I wrote novels, I even wrote a detestable play. Of these nothing survives. The master read them all, and then, on the following Sunday at breakfast, he would give me his criticism, and inculcate, little by little, two or three principles that sum up his long and patient lessons. "If one has any originality, the first thing requisite is to bring it out; if one has none, the first thing to be done is to acquire it."

Talent is long patience. Everything which one desires to express must be looked at with sufficient attention, and during a sufficiently long time, to discover in it some aspect which no one has as yet seen or described. In everything there is still some spot unex-

plored, because we are accustomed only to use our eyes with the recollection of what others before us have thought on the subject which we contemplate. The smallest object contains something unknown. Find it. To describe a fire that flames, and a tree on a plain, look, keep looking, at that flame and that tree till in your eyes they have lost all resemblance to any other tree or any other fire.

This is the way to become original.

Having, besides, laid down this truth, that there are not in the whole world two grains of sand, two specks, two hands, or two noses exactly alike, he compelled me to describe, in a few phrases, a being or an object in such a manner as to clearly particularize it, and to distinguish it from all the other beings or all the other objects of the same race or the same species.

"When you pass," he used to say, "a grocer seated at his shop-door, a janitor smoking

his pipe, a stand of hackney coaches, show me that grocer and that janitor, their attitude, their whole physical appearance, embracing likewise, as indicated by the skilfulness of the picture, their whole moral nature, so that I cannot confound them with any other grocer or any other janitor ; make me see, in one word, that a certain cab-horse does not resemble the fifty others that follow or precede it."

I have stated elsewhere his ideas of style. They are closely connected with the theory of observation which I have just explained.

Whatever be the thing one wishes to say, there is only one noun to express it, only one verb to give it life, only one adjective to qualify it. Search, then, till that noun, that verb, that adjective, are discovered : never be content with "very nearly ;" never have recourse to tricks, however happy, or to buffooneries of language, to avoid a difficulty.

We can interpret and describe the most subtle things if we bear in mind the verse of Boileau :

*“ D’un mot mis en sa place enseigna le pouvoir.”*

There is no need of the strange, complicated, illimitable Chinese vocabulary, which is imposed on us to-day under the name of artistic writing, in order to fix every shade of thought ; but it is necessary to discern, with the utmost lucidity, all the modifications of the value of a word according to the place it occupies. Let us have fewer nouns, verbs, and adjectives with almost incomprehensible meanings, and more varied phrases, differently constructed, ingeniously turned, full of sonority and skilful rhythms. Let us endeavor to be excellent stylists rather than collectors of rare forms.

It is, in fact, more difficult to handle the phrase at pleasure, to make it say everything (even that which it does not express), and to

fill it with hidden meanings, and with secret suggestions which are not formulated, than to invent new expressions, or to search in the depths of old forgotten books all those which have passed out of use, and which, having lost all significance, are for us only dead words.

The French language, moreover, is a pure stream which the mannerisms of writers have never been able, and never will be able, to trouble. Every century has thrown into this limpid current its fashions, its pretentious archaisms, and its affectations, without any of these useless attempts and impotent efforts floating on its pellucid surface. The nature of this language is to be clear, logical, and nervous. It refuses to be enfeebled, obscured, or corrupted.

Those who to-day write and describe without attention to abstract terms, those who make the rain or hail fall on the *cleanness* of the window-panes, may, also, fling stones at

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the simplicity of their fellow-laborers. They may hit, perhaps, the fellow-laborers that possess a body, but will never reach simplicity which has none.

GUY DE MAUPASSANT.

LA GUILLETTE, ÉTRETAT, *September*, 1887.



1.

THE FISHING PARTY.



## I.

“ PSHAW ! ” exclaimed M. Roland abruptly after a quarter of an hour's silence, during which he had remained motionless, with his eyes fixed on the water, and occasionally, by a slight movement, feeling the line he had dropped down into the sea.

Madame Roland had been dozing at the stern by the side of Madame Rosémilly, who had been invited to join the party, but roused herself at her husband's exclamation, and turning her head toward him, asked :

“ Well, what is it, G r me ? ”

He replied in a tone of vexation :

"Can't get another bite. Since noon I've caught nothing. One ought never to go fishing with women ; they make us too late in starting."

His two sons, Pierre and Jean, who were sitting, one on the starboard, the other on the port side, each with a line over his forefinger, began to laugh at the same instant, and Jean replied :

"You are very gallant to our guest, papa !"

M. Roland was confused, and made his excuses.

"I beg pardon, Madame Rosémilly, but I can't help it. I invite ladies because I like their company, and then, when I find myself on the water, I think of nothing but fish."

Madame Roland was now wide awake, and was gazing with a softened air at the wide stretch of cliffs and sea. She murmured :

"Still you have had good sport."

Her husband shook his head in negation, while he cast a satisfied glance on the basket where the fish, captured by the three men,

were still palpitating vaguely with a low sound of sticking scales and quivering fins, weak ineffectual struggles, while they opened their mouths in the deadly air.

M. Roland took the hamper between his



knees and tipped it till the silver flood of creatures reached the edge, in order to see those at the bottom; the palpitation of their death agony grew stronger, and their pungent odor, a wholesome stench of the sea, arose from the full body of the basket.

The old fisher inhaled it greedily, as if it were the scent of roses, and declared:

“By George! They are fresh, these fellows,” and then continued :

“How many did you catch, doctor?”

The elder son, Pierre, a man of thirty, with black whiskers closely trimmed, but without mustache or beard, replied :

“Not many. Three or four.”

The father turned to the younger son.

“And you, Jean?”

Jean, a tall, light-haired youth, with a full, heavy beard, and considerably younger than his brother, smiled as he answered :

“About the same as Pierre. Four or five.”

They always told him the same lies, and they delighted the old fellow beyond measure.

He rolled his line round a thole-pin, and crossing his arms announced :

“I’ll never again try to fish in the afternoon. After ten o’clock, it is all over. The rascals will not bite ; they take a *siesta*.”

The good man looked at the surrounding sea with the satisfied air of a proprietor.

He had been a jeweller in Paris, but an irresistible love of sailing and fishing tore him from his counter as soon as he had ac-

quired a modest competence. He left Paris and betook himself to Havre, where he bought a boat and became an amateur sailor. His two sons, Pierre and Jean, remained at Paris to continue their studies, and came, occasionally during vacations, to share the amusements of their father.

The elder son, Pierre, five years older than Jean, felt on leaving college a vocation successively for various professions. He tried half a dozen, one after another, and, quickly disgusted with each, plunged at once into new hopes.

Finally medicine tempted him, and he set to work with such ardor that he received his degree as doctor after a brief course, which was shortened by dispensations granted by the authorities. He was high spirited, intelligent, changeable, and tenacious, full of utopian and philosophic ideas.

Jean, as fair as Pierre was dark, as calm as his brother was excitable, as sweet tempered as his brother was sour, had quietly studied law, and obtained his diploma at the same time that Pierre graduated in medicine.

Both were now taking a holiday with their family, and both had formed the project of establishing themselves at Havre, if they could succeed in doing so satisfactorily.

Still a vague jealousy—one of those dormant jealousies which grow up almost invisibly between brothers and sisters, till they mature and burst forth on the occasion of a marriage or of a piece of good luck happening to one—kept them on the alert in a state of fraternal and inoffensive hostility. They certainly loved each other, but they were spies on each other. Pierre, who was five years old when Jean was born, regarded with the dislike of a spoiled little pet, this other little pet, which suddenly appeared in the arms of his father and mother, and which was so caressed and beloved by them.

Jean had been from childhood a model of gentleness, goodness, and even temper; and Pierre gradually became wearied of hearing the continual praise of his big brother, for to him his gentleness seemed effeminate, his goodness silly, and his kindness blind. His parents, good, easy people, who dreamed of



their sons occupying honorable commonplace positions, reproached him with his indecisions, his enthusiasms, his abortive attempts, his ineffectual impulses toward generous ideas and artistic professions.

After he had attained manhood, they no longer said to him, "Look at Jean, and do like him," but whenever he heard, "Jean did this, Jean did that," he understood clearly this hidden allusion, and the sense of the words.

Their mother, a good, orderly housewife, rather sentimental, was continually appeasing the little rivalries that sprang up every day between her two big sons, over all the little details of domestic life. At this moment her peace of mind was disturbed by a trifling event which she feared might lead to a complication. She had during the winter, while her sons were completing their special studies, made the acquaintance of a neighbor, Madame Rosémilly, widow of a ship-captain who had died at sea two years before. The young widow was quite young, twenty-three years old, a woman of capacity, who knew life by instinct like a wild animal, as if she had seen,

experienced, comprehended, and weighed all possible events, which she judged with a sound reason and kindly spirit. She had fallen into the habit of coming in the evening, to do her embroidery or to converse, to the house of her neighbors, who kindly offered her a cup of tea.

M. Roland, whose mania for a nautical pose gave him no peace, interrogated his new friend respecting the deceased captain, and she spoke of him, his voyages, his old tales, without embarrassment, like a sensible woman resigned to her loss, who loves life and respects death.

The sons, on their return, finding this pretty widow installed in the house, at once began to pay their court to her, less through desire to please her than from a longing to supplant each other.

Their mother, with her practical common sense, hoped that one of them would be successful, for the young widow was rich, but she would have been glad that the other should not feel annoyed.

Madame Rosémilly was a blonde, with blue

eyes, a crown of fluffy hair that fluttered in the slightest breeze, and a daring, resolute, combative air, which by no means was in harmony with the prudent circumspection of her disposition.

She already seemed to prefer Jean, attracted to him by a similarity of character. This preference, however, was only shown by an almost imperceptible difference in voice and look, and by the fact that she sometimes took his advice.

She seemed to divine that Jean would fortify her own opinion, while that of Pierre would be certainly different. When she spoke about the doctor's ideas in politics, art, philosophy or morals, she would occasionally say "Your nonsense." Then he would look at her with the cold stare of a lawyer who held an indictment against all women, those poor creatures.

Before the return of his sons, M. Roland had never invited her to his fishing parties ; nor, indeed, did he take his wife on these excursions, for he wanted to embark at day-break with Captain Beausire, an old skipper

whom he had met at high-water on the quay, and whose intimate friend he had become, and by the old sailor Papagris, commonly called Jean Bart, who was the boat-keeper.

One evening in the preceding week, Madame Rosémilly, who had dined with them, observed, "Fishing must be amusing, is it not?" and the retired jeweller, flattered in his ruling passion, and possessed with a desire to disseminate it and make believers as priests do, exclaimed :

"Will you come with us?"

"Oh, yes."

"Next Tuesday?"

"Yes, next Tuesday."

"Have you the courage to start at five in the morning?"

"Oh, no, no, certainly."

He was disappointed and chilled, and began to doubt of her vocation. Nevertheless, he asked :

"At what hour can you start?"

"Well—at nine!"

"Not before?"

“ No, not before. That is too soon ! ”

M. Roland hesitated. It was certain that nothing would be caught, for when the sun is warm the fish do not bite ; but the two



brothers hastened to arrange the party, and organize everything before the session adjourned.

On the following Tuesday, then, the *Pearl* dropped her anchor beneath the white rocks of the cape of La Hève ; they fished till noon,

then dozed, then fished without taking anything, and Roland, discovering somewhat late in the day that Madame Rosémilly really cared for nothing but the sail, and seeing that there was no sign of a nibble at his lines, uttered, in an access of unreasoning impatience, that energetic "Pshaw!" which was addressed as much to the widow who was so indifferent as to the fish that would not be caught.

He was at present engaged in gazing on the captured fish, his fish, with the trembling joy of a miser; then he looked to the sky and remarked that the sun was sinking.

"Well, boys," he said, "shall we go back a bit?"

The sons both drew in their lines, rolled them up, cleaned their hooks and stuck them into their corks, and then waited.

M. Roland stood up to look at the horizon in sea-faring style.

"No more wind," he said; "we must row, my lads."

Then, with his arm pointing to the north, he added :

"Look there, the Southampton boat."

The smooth sea lay stretched out like a piece of blue stuff, boundless, gleaming with reflections of gold and fire, and away in the direction indicated a blackish cloud ascended against the rosy sky. Below it was seen the ship, which at such a distance seemed quite small. Southward were numerous other clouds of smoke, all tending toward the jetty of Havre, the white line of which was scarcely visible, with the lighthouse erect as a horn at the end.

Roland asked:

"Does not the *Normandie* arrive to-day?"

Jean replied:

"Yes, papa."

"Give me my glass. I believe she is down there."

He pulled out the copper tube, adjusted the instrument to his eye, and then, delighted with seeing her, exclaimed:

"Yes, yes, it is the *Normandie*; I recognize her two smokestacks! Will you have a look, Madame Rosémilly?"

She took the glass and turned it toward

the distant American steamer, doubtless without bringing it into the field, for she distinguished nothing but some blue with a circle of color, a round rainbow, and then strange objects, like a kind of eclipses, which made her feel quite sick.

She returned the glass with the words :

“ I never could use that instrument. It used to put my husband in a bad temper, for he would remain for hours at the window watching the ships pass.”

M. Roland was vexed as he replied :

“ It must be the fault of your eyes, for my glass is a very good one.”

Then he offered it to his wife.

“ Will you take a look ? ”

“ No, thanks ; I know beforehand I cannot.”

Madame Roland, a woman of forty-eight years, but who did not show them, seemed to enjoy more than the others the sail and the close of the day.

Her chestnut hair had just commenced to whiten. She had a calm, thoughtful air—a happy, kindly air pleasant to see. Accord-



ing to a remark of her son Pierre, she knew the price of money, which did not prevent her from enjoying the charm of revery. She loved to read romances and poetry, not for their value as works of art, but for the tender and melancholy dreaminess they awoke in her. A verse, often commonplace, often bad, set the little string in vibration, as she said, and gave her the feeling of a mysterious desire almost realized. She felt a pleasure, too, in these light emotions that somewhat troubled her soul, which was as well kept as an account book.

Since her arrival at Havre she had become visibly stouter, and this rendered heavy a figure which had once been slender and supple.

This excursion on the water had charmed her. Her husband, without being bad natured, bullied her without anger and without dislike, in the bullying tone of the despots of the counter for whom an order is equivalent to a curse. In the presence of strangers he restrained himself, but in his family he gave way and assumed terrible airs, although he

was afraid of everybody. She, in her dislike of noise, scenes, and useless explanations, always yielded and never asked for anything ; she had not dared even ask, for a long time back, to join in a sail. It was with joy then that she seized this occasion, and tasted this rare and novel pleasure.

After they had left the shore, she abandoned herself utterly, body and soul, to the gentle gliding over the water. She did not think, she did not roam among her recollections or her hopes ; it seemed to her that her heart, like her body, was floating over something soft, fluid, delicious, which rocked her into apathy.

When the father gave the order, "Come to your places for rowing," she smiled as she saw her two big sons take off their jackets, and roll up their shirt-sleeves on their bare arms.

Pierre, who was nearest the two ladies, took the starboard oar, Jean that on the larboard side, and they waited till the master cried, "Oars all !" for he stickled about having these manœuvres executed according to rule.

Then at one dash, they let fall the oars, and swung back with all their force, and a rivalry in displaying their vigor began. They had gone out gently with sails set, but the breeze had fallen, and the masculine pride of the two brothers was at once aroused at the prospect of measuring their strength against each other.

Whenever they went fishing with their father alone, they rowed without a coxswain, for Roland prepared the lines while watching the progress of the skiff, which he guided by a word or gesture. "Easy, Jean." "Now, Pierre, slash it through," or perhaps he said, "Now *one*, now *two*, more elbow grease." Then the sluggard pulled stronger, and the toiler took it more easily, till the boat's course was straight.

To-day they resolved to display their biceps. The arms of Pierre were hairy, rather thin but nervous; those of Jean, plump and white, rather pink, with a mass of muscles that played beneath the skin.

Pierre had the advantage at first. With teeth set, brow wrinkled, legs stretched, hands

clinchd on the oar, he made it bend at every stroke, and the *Pearl* swerved aside. M. Roland, sitting in the bow to leave the sternsheets to the ladies, roared out, "Easy, number *one* ; pull, number *two*." Then number *one* redoubled his fury, and *two* could not reply to his disorderly stroke.

At length, the captain gave the word "Stop." The two oars rose together, and Jean, by his father's orders, pulled a few strokes by himself. But from this time the advantage was his ; he grew animated and heated, while Pierre, panting and exhausted by his rash struggle, grew weak and out of breath. Four times had M. Roland to stop in order to give the elder time to recover his wind, and to get the skiff on her course. The doctor, with his brow sweating, and his cheeks pale, vexed and humiliated, stammered out :

"I do not know what has seized me. I have a spasm at the heart. I started in very well, and that has strained my arm."

Jean asked, "Would you like me to take both oars ?"

“No, thanks. It will soon pass.”

Madame Roland, in a tone of annoyance, said :

“Now, Pierre, what is the sense of putting yourself into such a state? You are not a baby now.”

He shrugged his shoulders and began again to row.

Madame Rosémilly pretended not to see, notice, or hear anything. Her little blonde head made, at every movement of the boat, a pretty swing backwards, which shook the fine hair on her temples.

But M. Roland cried, “Halloo, there’s the *Prince Albert* overtaking us!” They all looked at it. Long, low, with its two smoke-stacks sloping astern, and its two yellow paddle-boxes, like round cheeks, the Southampton steamer came on at full speed, her deck covered with passengers and open parasols; her paddles with noisy rapidity striking the water, that fell back in foam, gave her an air of haste, the air of a hard-pressed messenger, while her upright stem cut the sea into two swelling waves

which glided, thin and transparent, along her sides.

When she was quite near the *Pearl*, M. Roland lifted his hat, the two ladies waved their handkerchiefs, and the salutation was answered by half a dozen parasols waved from the steamer as she passed on, leaving behind her, on the tranquil and gleaming surface of the sea, a few gentle undulations.

Other ships came into view, hooded with smoke, hastening from all points of the compass to the short white jetty, which swallowed them up like a mouth, one after the other. Fishing-boats and large sailing-ships, with their tracery of masts gliding against the sky, in tow of invisible tugs, all came, slowly or speedily, to that devouring ogre, which at intervals seemed, in over-gorged satiety, to vomit out to the sea another fleet of packet-ships, brigs, schooners, and three-masters, with their tangled network of ropes and spars. The steamers sped on, right or left, over the smooth bosom of the ocean, while the sailing-ships, cast off by the tugs that had hauled them out, remained motionless, spread-

ing, from mainsail to royals, their white or brown canvas, which seemed red in the setting sun.

Madame Roland, her eyes half closed, murmured :

“ How beautiful the sea is ! ”

Madame Rosémilly replied, with a prolonged sigh, which, however, had no sadness in it :

“ Yes, but it does plenty of mischief sometimes.”

Roland exclaimed :

“ There’s the *Normandie* going into port. Is not she a big one ? ”

Then he told all about the coast before them, from the other side of the mouth of the Seine—twenty kilometres wide, that mouth—he said. He pointed out Villerville, Trouville, Houlgate, Luc, Arromanches, the river of Caen, and the rocks of Calvados, which render navigation dangerous as far as Cherbourg. Then he discussed the sandbanks of the Seine, which shift every tide, and mislead even the pilots of Quillebœuf if they do not examine the channel every day.

He bade them remark that Havre separated Upper and Lower Normandy. In Lower Normandy the coast sinks into pasture-lands, meadows, and fields down to the water's edge. The coast of Upper Normandy, on the other hand, was steep, with huge cliffs, indented and sheer, that made as far as Dunkirk an immense white wall, where every break in the line held a village or a port,—Étretat, Fécamp, Saint Valery, Tréport, Dieppe, and so on.

The two ladies, in apathetic contentment, and moved by the sight of the ocean covered with ships that came and went like beasts around their den, were not listening ; they did not speak, for they were somewhat crushed by the vast expanse of air and water, and rendered silent by the calmful magnificence of the sunset. Roland alone never stopped talking ; he was one of those whom nothing affects. Women, more nervous, sometimes feel that the sound of a useless voice is as irritating as an impertinence.

Pierre and Jean, once more calmed down, rowed on slowly, and the *Pearl* advanced to





LANDING FROM THE *Pearl*.



the harbor, looking diminutive by the side of the large ships.

When she touched the quay, the sailor Papagris, who was waiting for them, took the hand of the ladies to assist their landing, and the party entered the town. A numerous, peaceful crowd, the crowd that goes every day to the jetty at high water, was likewise returning.

Mesdames Roland and Rosémilly led the way, followed by the three men. As they went up the Rue de Paris, they paused occasionally before a milliner's or goldsmith's shop to look at a hat or a trinket, and, after an exchange of ideas, resumed their walk.

Before the Place de la Bourse, Roland, as he did every day, looked at the basin du Commerce, which was filled with ships and prolonged by other basins, where the large hulls, with their sides touching, lay four or five deep. The countless masts along the many miles extent of quays, the masts with their yards, their vanes, and their ropes, gave to this opening in the middle of the town the aspect of a huge dead forest. Above this

leafless wood the gulls were circling, watching for all the refuse cast in the water, and dropping on it like a falling stone. A cabin-boy, who was fixing a block at the end of a peak, looked as if he had climbed up to seek for nests.

"Will you waive all ceremony and dine with us, to finish the day together?" said Madame Roland to Madame Rosémilly.

"Yes, with pleasure. I accept without ceremony. It would be melancholy to go home alone this evening."

Pierre, who had heard the remark, and whom the indifference of the young widow began to annoy, muttered, "Humph! the widow is putting on airs now." For some days he had called her the "widow." The word, inexpressive as it was, irritated Jean simply by the tone, which seemed to him ill-natured and injurious.

The three men did not say a word more till they reached their dwelling. It was a narrow house, composed of basement and two stories, in the Rue Belle-Normandie. The servant, Josephine, a lass of about nine-

teen, a country girl at low wages, who had in excess the startled, animal look of the peasantry, opened the door, closed it after them, and followed her master to the reception-room on the first floor. Then she said:

“A gent’s been here three times.”

M. Roland, who never spoke to her without bawling and cursing, cried out :

“Who is it that’s been here ? doggone it !”

She was not disturbed at any time by these bursts of clamor from her master, and continued :

“A gent from the notary.”

“What notary ?”

“Well, M. Canu.”

“And what did the gentleman say ?”

“That M. Canu would come himself this evening.”

M. Lecanu was the notary, and, to some degree, the friend of Roland, whose business he transacted. For him to announce a visit in the evening, argued some urgent and important affair. The Rolands looked at each other, on this intelligence, with the anxious feeling which seizes persons of moderate

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means at every intervention of a notary, who awakes a host of ideas about contracts, legacies, lawsuits, and other things agreeable or disagreeable. After some seconds, Roland murmured:

“What can this mean?”

Madame Rosémilly began to laugh.

“Why, it is a legacy, I’m sure. I bring good luck.”

They were not, however, expecting the death of any one who was likely to leave them anything.

Madame Roland, blessed with an excellent memory for pedigrees, at once began to recall to mind all the marriages on her own and her husband’s sides, and trace out the descendants and cousins in their various branches.

She asked, even before taking off her hat:

“Tell me, father” (she called her husband “father” at home, and sometimes “Monsieur Roland” before strangers), “tell me, father, do you remember whom Joseph Lebru married when he married the second time?”

“Yes, a little Dumenil, daughter of a paper-maker.”

“Has he any children?”

“Four or five, at the least, I believe.”

“No ; nothing from that quarter.”

She was already eager in this inquiry, and clung to this prospect of a little competence falling to them from the sky. But Pierre, who loved his mother dearly, who knew her to be a bit of a dreamer, and feared a slight disappointment, a slight vexation, if her illusions were shattered, and if the news, instead of being good, turned out bad, checked her.

“Do not bother yourself, mamma ; there are no more American uncles. For my part, I should sooner believe that it is about a marriage for Jean.”

All were surprised at the idea, and Jean was somewhat annoyed that his brother should have spoken of such a thing before Madame Rosémilly.

“Why for me rather than you ? Your supposition is very disputable. You are the oldest : a marriage for you would be the first to be thought of. And then, as for me, I do not want to marry.”

Pierre grinned.

"Are you in love, then?"

The other, displeased, replied :

"Must one be in love to say that one does not want to marry yet?"

"Good. The 'yet' explains all. You are waiting."

"Grant that I am waiting, if you like."

M. Roland, who had listened and reflected, all at once found the most probable solution.

"By Jove, we are all stupid to rack our brains thus. M. Lecanu is a friend of ours. He knows that Pierre is looking for a doctor's office, and Jean for a lawyer's office : he has found how to place one of you."

This was so simple and probable that everybody agreed.

"Dinner is ready," said the servant-girl. All went to their rooms to wash their hands before sitting down to table.

Ten minutes later they were seated in the little dining-room on the ground floor.

They did not talk much at first, but after a few minutes Roland once more expressed his surprise at this visit of the notary.



“In brief, why did he not write? Why did he send his clerk three times? Why is he coming himself?”

Pierre thought this quite natural.

“He wants an immediate answer, and perhaps he has to communicate some confidential clauses which one is not fond of putting in writing.”

They remained, however, preoccupied, and somewhat out of sorts at having asked the stranger, Madame Rosémilly, who spoiled their conversation as to the resolutions to be taken.

They had just ascended to the reception-room when the notary was announced.

Roland rushed to meet him.

“Good-day, dear Master.”

He used as a title for M. Lecanu the word “Master,” which precedes the name of all notaries.

Madame Rosémilly rose.

“I shall take my leave. I am very tired.”

They feebly attempted to detain her, but she did not consent, and went without any of the three gentlemen escorting her as usual.

Madame Roland paid great attention to the new-comer.

"A cup of coffee, M. Lecanu?"

"No, thanks. I have just risen from table."

"A cup of tea, then?"

"I will not say no, but in a little while. We must first talk business."

In the profound silence which followed these words nothing but the rhythmical ticking of the clock was heard, and the noise from the lower story of the dishes being washed by the girl, who was too stupid to listen at keyholes.

The notary began.

"Did you know at Paris a certain M. Maréchal,—Léon Maréchal?"

M. and Madame Roland uttered the same exclamation, "Of course I did."

"He was one of your friends?"

Roland declared :

"Our best, sir ; but madly fond of Paris. He never quitted the boulevard. He was chief clerk in the finance bureau. I never saw him after I left the capital. And then

we ceased to write to each other. You know when one lives far apart—”

The notary continued gravely :

“ M. Maréchal is dead.”

Husband and wife made together that slight movement of sorrowful surprise, true or feigned, with which such news is received.

M. Lecanu continued :

“ My colleague in Paris has just communicated to me the chief clause of his will, by which he makes your son Jean, M. Jean Roland, his sole legatee.”

The astonishment created was so great that no one had a word to say.

Madame Roland was the first to master her emotion, and stammered out:

“ My God ! Poor Léon—our poor friend. My God, my God ! Dead.”

Tears glistened in her eyes, those silent tears of women, drops of grief that spring from the soul and fall over the cheek, and seem so sad because they are so clear.

Roland, however, thought less of the sadness of the loss than of the hope held out. Still he dared not immediately ask about the

clauses of the will, or the amount of the fortune ; but, to approach to the interesting question, asked :

“Of what did poor Maréchal die?”

M. Lecanu was completely ignorant.

“I only know,” he said, “that, dying without direct heirs, he leaves all his fortune, twenty thousand francs per annum in the three per cents, to your second son, whom he saw born and grow up, and whom he deemed deserving of this legacy. In default of the legacy being accepted by M. Jean, the property will go to the orphan asylum.”

M. Roland could no longer conceal his joy, and cried :

“That’s a noble idea. If I had had no offspring, I certainly would not have forgotten him either—my dear friend.”

The notary smiled.

“I have been very much gratified,” he said, “at announcing the matter personally. It is always a pleasure to bring people good news.”

He did not give a thought to the fact that this good news was the death of a friend, of the best friend of M. Roland, who himself

had suddenly forgotten the intimacy which he had just proclaimed with such conviction.

Madame Roland and her sons alone preserved a sorrowful countenance. She continued to weep a little all the time, and to wipe her eyes with her handkerchief, which she then raised to her lips to check her heavy sighs.

The doctor, in low tones, observed :

“He was a good fellow, very kindly disposed. He often asked us to dinner, my brother and me.”

Jean, his large eyes open and sparkling, with a gesture habitual to him, took his beautiful beard in his right hand, and made it slide through his fingers as if to lengthen and thin it.

He opened his lips twice to utter some suitable phrase, and, having looked for one a long time, found only this :

“He was very fond of me, indeed, and embraced me always when I went to see him.”

But the father's thoughts were galloping,

galloping about the legacy, just announced, and already acquired, about this money hidden behind the door, which would come in at once, to-morrow, as soon as the words "I accept" were uttered.

He asked :

"There is no possible difficulty ? no suit ? no contest ?"

M. Lecanu was quite at his ease.

"My colleague in Paris describes the situation as completely plain. We only want M. Jean to accept."

"Good, then ; and the fortune is quite clear ?"

"Quite clear."

"All formalities have been gone through ?"

"All."

Suddenly the old jeweller felt a touch of shame—a vague, instinctive, transitory shame—at his haste in assuring himself, and continued :

"You understand, of course, that if I ask you all these things immediately, it is to spare my son annoyances which he might not foresee. Sometimes there are debts,

some embarrassments, how do I know? And then one is in a thorny labyrinth. In fine, I am not the legatee, but I think of the little one before all."

In the home-circle, Jean was always called "the little one," although he was much taller than Pierre.

Madame Roland suddenly seemed to come out of a dream, to recall something far off, almost forgotten, which she had heard at some time and was not sure of, and she stammered out :

"Did you not say that our poor friend Maréchal had left his fortune to my little Jean?"

"Yes, madame."

She replied simply :

"It gives me great pleasure, for it proves that he loved us."

Roland rose.

"Do you wish, dear sir, that my son sign at once the deed of acceptance?"

"No—no, M. Roland. To-morrow—to-morrow, at my office at two o'clock, if that suits you."

“Yes—yes ; certainly.”

Then Madame Roland, who had also risen, and was smiling after her tears, took two steps toward the notary, laid her hand on the back of his arm-chair, and, gazing on him with the tender look of a grateful mother, asked :

“The cup of tea, M. Lecanu ?”

“At present, gladly, madame, with pleasure.”

The servant was called, and brought in first those dry crackers in deep tin boxes,—those insipid and distressing English biscuits that seemed cooked for parrot bills, and soldered in metal cases for voyages round the world. She then went for some unbleached napkins, folded in little squares,—those tea napkins which are never washed in thrifty families. She came in a third time with the sugar-bowl and the cups ; then she went out to boil the water.

The company waited.

No one could speak : they all had too much to think of and nothing to say. Madame Roland alone made some commonplace





THE READING OF THE WILL.



remarks. She told about the fishing party, and praised the *Pearl* and Madame Rosémilly.

“Charming, charming woman !” replied the notary.

Roland, his back leaning against the marble chimney-piece as in winter when the fire was burning, his hands in his pockets, his lips puckered up as if to whistle, could not keep still, as he was tortured with an imperious desire to give vent to all his joy.

The two brothers, in two similar arm-chairs, their legs crossed in the same fashion, right and left of the central round table, looked straight before them in similar attitudes, that were filled with different expressions.

The tea appeared at last. The notary took, sugared, and drank his tea, after crumbling into it a little cracker too hard to bite. Then he rose, shook hands, and left.

“It is agreed,” repeated Roland, “to-morrow at your office, two o’clock.”

“So it is agreed ; to-morrow, two o’clock.”

Jean had not said a word.

After the departure of the notary there was again silence, till father Roland clapped his two open hands on the two shoulders of his younger son, and exclaimed :

“Well, you deuced lucky dog, don’t you embrace me ?”

Jean smiled and embraced his father, saying :

“That does not seem to me indispensable.”

But the father could not restrain himself, for joy. He walked about, played the piano on the furniture with clumsy fingers, pirouetted on his heels, and repeated :

“What luck ! what luck ! Here’s luck indeed !”

Pierre asked :

“You knew Maréchal well, then, at one time ?”

His father replied :

“By Jove, he passed all his evenings at our house. You must remember that he went on holidays to get you at the college, and often took you back again after dinner. Why, the very day when Jean was born, it

— was he who went to bring the doctor ! He had breakfasted with us when your mother found herself ill. We knew at once what was the matter, and off he went at a run. In his hurry he took my hat instead of his own. I remember that, because we laughed a good deal about it afterwards. It is even likely he remembered this circumstance when he was dying, and, as he had no heir, said to himself : ‘ I aided at the little fellow’s birth ; well, I’ll leave him my fortune.’ ”

Madame Roland, buried in a deep easy-chair, seemed lost in memories. She murmured as if she were thinking aloud :

“ Ah, he was a noble friend, devoted, faithful ; a rare man, as times are now.”

Jean rose. “ I am going to take a bit of a walk,” he said.

His father was surprised, and wished to detain him, for they had to talk, to make plans, to form resolutions. But the young man was obstinate, alleging an appointment. Besides, there would be plenty of time to come to an understanding before the legacy came into his possession.

He went away, for he longed to be alone in order to reflect. Pierre, in his turn, said he was going out, and some minutes later followed his brother.

When Roland was alone with his wife he took her in his arms, kissed her half a score of times on each cheek, and, in reply to a reproach she often had made to him, said :

“You see, my darling, that it would have been no good for me to stay longer in Paris, and work myself to death for the children, in place of coming here to recover my health, since a fortune has dropped to us out of the clouds.”

She became very serious.

“It falls from the clouds for Jean,” she said—“but Pierre?”

“Pierre! why, he’s a doctor, he will make—money—and then his brother will do something for him.”

“No. He would not take anything. Besides, the legacy is for Jean, nobody but Jean. Pierre, you see, finds himself at great disadvantage.”

Poor Roland seemed perplexed.

“Then, we will leave him something more in our will.”

“No. That would not be just, either,” she cried out.

“Ah, well, then, eh? What do you want me to do? You are always looking out for a lot of unpleasant ideas. You spoil all my pleasures. I’m off to bed. Good-night. All the same, it is a stroke of good luck, right down good luck!”

He went his way, enchanted in spite of everything, and without a word of regret for the friend who died so generously.

Madame Roland began again to dream in front of the lamp in which the wick was smoking.





II.

THE JEALOUS BROTHERS.



## II.

As soon as he was out of doors, Pierre turned his steps toward the Rue de Paris, Havre's principal thoroughfare—well-lighted, animated, and noisy. The rather fresh breeze coming from the sea played about his face, while he walked slowly, his cane under his arm, and his hands behind his back.

Somehow he felt ill at ease—dull, disappointed, like one who has heard bad news. This unpleasant impression had not been formulated into thought, and had he been suddenly called upon he would have been

puzzled to have told the cause of this heaviness of spirit, this torpor of body. He was out of sorts—suffering from an uneasy feeling he could not locate. He had within him somewhere a slight sense of discomfort—a scarcely perceptible moral bruise that he could not place his finger upon, but which, nevertheless, annoyed, fatigued, saddened, and irritated him; an unnamed and trifling trouble, a mere foreboding of sorrow.

Arrived at the Place du Théâtre, he felt attracted by the lights of the Café Tortoni, and slowly sauntered up to the illuminated façade; but just as he was about entering, he reflected that he might encounter friends and acquaintances—people with whom he would be compelled to converse—and a sudden repugnance for this commonplace, vinous good-fellowship took possession of him. Then, retracing his steps, he again followed the main thoroughfare in the direction of the harbor.

He asked himself, “Where shall I go?” seeking some place that would prove agreeable to him in his present frame of mind.

He did not find any, since he felt annoyed when alone, and still did not wish to meet any one.

On reaching the principal quay he hesi-



tated a moment and then turned toward the pier : he had decided in favor of solitude.

As he passed near a bench on the break-water, he stopped and sat down, tired of walking and already out of conceit with his proposed promenade.

Again he asked himself, "What is the matter with me this evening?" and set to work to recollect what disappointment he had met with, much as one interrogates a patient to determine the cause of his fever.

He was in a peculiar frame of mind, at once excited and thoughtful—one moment being in a labyrinth of confused impressions, the next in the full possession of his logical powers, approving or chiding his successive mental phases; but, in the end, the original turbulent emotions always gained the upper hand—the man of feeling dominating the man of intellect.

Then he sought to discover the origin of his temporary weakness; of the necessity he felt to keep moving without having any end in view; of the desire to meet some one who might combat his opinions, and at the same time of the disinclination for the society of those he might see, and his distaste for what they might say to him.

At last he put this question to himself:

"Could it have been Jean's inheritance?"

Yes, that might, after all, have been the

cause of his discomfort. When the notary had brought the news, he had felt his heart beat a little faster than usual. Surely, we are not always masters of ourselves, but are subject to spontaneous and persistent emotions against which we struggle in vain.

He reflected deeply over this physiological problem—the impression produced by an occurrence on the Instinctive Being, and creating within one a current of ideas and sensations, joyful or painful, the opposite of what the Thinking Being desires, demands, or considers good and wholesome—the Thinking Being, which is its superior through the cultivation of the intellect.

He tried to picture to himself the state of mind of the son who inherits a large fortune, and who is about to test many longed-for pleasures, but hitherto forbidden by a father's narrow income—a father beloved and pitied.

He rose and walked toward the end of the pier. He already felt better, glad to have understood—to have surprised himself, as it were, and unveiled the other personality that is within us.

“So I was jealous of Jean,” he thought ; “certainly a sufficiently unworthy sentiment. I am sure of it now, for the first thought that came into my head related to his marriage with Madame Rosémilly. I don’t fancy that goose of a reasonable woman, who seems made to disgust one with sound sense and goodness. Thus it is uncalled - for envy—its very essence—that which is because it is ! It must be looked after.”

He had reached the signal-mast that indicates the depth of water in the harbor, and lit a match in order to read the list of ships that had been signalled outside, and were waiting to come in with the next tide. Steamers were expected from Brazil, La Plata, Chili, and Japan, besides two Danish brigs, a Norwegian schooner, and a Turkish steamer. This latter announcement surprised Pierre as much as if he had read of a Swiss steamer, and caused him to conjure up the vision of a large vessel swarming with men in turbans, who sprang up the rigging in wide trousers.

“But how stupid of me,” he thought ; “the Turks are a seafaring people.”



A few steps farther on he stopped to view the roadstead. On his right, above Sainte Adresse, the two electric lighthouses of Cape de la Hève, like two monstrous twin Cyclopes, cast across the water their prolonged and powerful glances. Starting from these two adjoining foci, two parallel rays—resembling the giant tails of two comets—fell in a straight line of extraordinary length, from the summit of the hill to the edge of the horizon. Then on the two piers, two other lights—the children of these Colossi—marked the entrance to the harbor; while beyond, across the Seine, could be seen still others, fixed and flashing, with brilliant effulgence and dark eclipses, opening and closing like eyes—the eyes of harbors, yellow, red, green, watching over the dark sea covered with ships; living eyes of the hospitable shore, saying, by the simple mechanical movement of their lids :

“It is I; I am Trouville; I, Honfleur; I, the river of Pont Audemer.”

And overlooking all the others, so high up and so far off that it could easily be mis-

taken for a planet, the aerial lighthouse of Étouville, lighting the way to Rouen across the sandbanks at the mouth of the great river.

Then on the deep, boundless sea, darker than the heavens, here and there stars seemed visible. They trembled in the nocturnal mist—small, near and distant, and also white, red, or green ; generally they were motionless, but some seemed to move. They were the lights on vessels at anchor that were waiting for the coming tide, or on those still in motion that were seeking an anchorage.

Just then the moon rose behind the town. It, too, looked like some huge, celestial beacon, placed in the heavens to guide the immeasurable flotilla of stars.

Pierre said to himself, almost aloud :

“And still we allow ourselves to be annoyed by trifles.”

Suddenly, quite near him, into the wide, black opening between the two piers, a shadow—a huge, fantastic shadow—glided. Leaning over the granite parapet, he saw a fishing-boat that was coming in without hum



PIERRE ON THE JETTY.



of voices, sound of waves, or splashing of oars, gently propelled by its tall brown sail filled with the breeze that came from the open bay.

"If one could live down there," he thought, "perhaps one might be at rest."

Then, having advanced a few steps farther, he saw a man seated at the end of the mole.

A dreamer, a lover, a sage, a happy man, or an unhappy one? Which was he? He came nearer, curious to see the face of this solitary watcher. In a second he had recognized his brother.

"What! Is it you, Jean?"

"What! Pierre? What are you doing here?"

"Getting a breath of fresh air. And you?"

Jean began to laugh.

"I am following your example."

And Pierre sat down by the side of his brother.

"How beautiful!"

"Yes."

From the tone of his voice Pierre under-

stood that Jean had not been looking at what was around him. He continued :

“When I come here I have ungovernable cravings to go away with these ships—to the north or to the south. Only to think that those lights yonder come from every quarter of the globe—from the lands with gigantic flowers and beautiful pale, or copper-colored girls ; the lands of humming-birds, elephants, unchained lions, negro kings ; from all the lands that furnish fairy tales for those of us who no longer believe in the ‘White Cat’ or the ‘Sleeping Beauty in the Wood!’ Wouldn’t it be splendid to be able to treat one’s self to a journey there ? But that would take money, and a good deal of it—”

He stopped suddenly, all at once remembering that his brother now had the necessary means, and that, liberated from every care—from daily toil—free without trammels of any kind, happy, joyous, he could go where fancy might dictate, toward the home of Swedish blondes or of Havanese brunettes.

Then one of those involuntary thoughts, common with him, so sudden, so rapid, that

they could neither be foreseen, checked, nor modified, came to him as from the mind of a second, independent and powerful personality.

“Bah! he is stupid, and will marry the little Rosémilly.”

He had risen to his feet.

“I leave you to dream of your future; I feel the need of exercise.”

He pressed his brother's hand, and continued in cordial tones :

“Well, little Jean, you are now wealthy. I am glad that I met you alone to-night, since it has afforded me an opportunity to tell you what real pleasure it has given me, to say how heartily I congratulate you, and how much I love you.”

“Thanks, thanks, my good Pierre, thanks!” stammered Jean, gentle and sympathetic by nature, greatly moved.

And Pierre turned backward, sauntering slowly, his cane under his arm, and his hands behind his back. When he had reached the town he again asked himself what he should do, not satisfied at having his walk cut short,

at having been turned away from the direction of the sea by the presence of his brother.

Suddenly an idea came to him.

"I'll go drink a glass of liqueur at Père Marowsko's," and he turned back toward the Ingouville quarter.

He had known Père Marowsko in the hospitals at Paris. He was an old Pole—some said a political refugee who had had exciting adventures, and who had come to France, where he had passed additional examinations, to carry on business as a druggist. Nothing was certainly known of his past career, although various legends had found currency among the in and out door students at the hospitals, and later among his neighbors. His reputation as a formidable conspirator, a Nihilist, a regicide, a patriot ready for any enterprise, had proved attractive to the vivid imagination of Pierre Roland, and he had become the friend of the old Pole, without, however, having obtained from him any details regarding his life. It was owing to the young physician that the old man had come to Havre to



establish himself in business, relying upon the patronage that the former had promised to bring him.

In the mean time he lived economically in his little shop, selling remedies to the small dealers and working-people of the neighborhood.

Pierre often dropped in to see him after dinner and have an hour's chat, for he had taken a fancy to Marowsko's calm face and infrequent observations ; the long pauses, in his opinion, indicating much profound reflection.

A single gas-jet burned over a counter filled with phials. Those in the window had not yet been lighted, from motives of economy. Behind the counter, seated on one chair while his feet rested on another, a bald-headed old man, with a large, beak-like nose that, continuing the facial line from his bare head, made him resemble a parrot, was fast asleep with his chin resting on his breast.

At the sound of the shop-bell he awoke, rose, and on recognizing the doctor, came forward to greet him with outstretched hands.

His black coat, spotted with stains of acids and sirups, and much too large for his small, lean frame, somewhat resembled an ancient cassock. Marowsko spoke with a strong Polish accent, that gave to his weak voice a lisping, childish character, and intonations like those of an infant just beginning to talk.

Pierre sat down.

"What's the news, my dear doctor?" asked the Pole.

"Nothing ; the same old story !"

"You don't seem lively this evening."

"No, I'm not often so."

"Come, come ! You must rouse yourself. What do you say to a glass of liqueur ?"

"Thanks ; I should be glad to have one."

"Well, then, I shall astonish you with a new preparation. For two months I've been trying to make something out of currants, from which thus far we have nothing but the sirup. I—well, I've found it—I've found it—a good liqueur, very good !"

And, beaming all over, he went to a closet, which he opened, and took out a phial. He moved about in an undecided way, with

short, incomplete gestures—never fully extending his arms or his legs, or making an entire motion. His ideas seemed to be modelled on his movements. He suggested, indicated, sketched them, but never went the length of stating them.

His principal business in life seemed to be the preparation of liqueurs and sirups. "With a good sirup or a good liqueur, one can make a fortune," was a frequent remark of his; and he had invented hundreds of sweet concoctions, without being able to place a single one of them on the market. Pierre declared that Marowsko made him think of Marat.

Two small glasses were brought from the back room and placed on the preparation counter. Then the two men examined the color of the new liquid by holding it up to the light.

"Beautiful ruby!" was Pierre's verdict.

"Isn't it?"

And the old parrot-like face was wreathed in smiles.

The doctor tasted the precious cordial,

held it in his mouth, pondered, tasted again, again reflected, and at last spoke :

“Good, very good, and with a decidedly original flavor. A genuine find, my dear sir.”

“Yes, I am quite satisfied.”

Then the old man consulted his visitor as to how the new liqueur should be named. He thought of calling it “Essence de Groseille,”\* or, rather, “Fine Groseille,” or “Grosélia,” or “Groséline.”

Pierre was not satisfied with either of these. Marowsko then had an idea.

“What you said just now is good, very good—‘Beautiful ruby.’”

The doctor argued against the appropriateness of the title, although it was his own invention, and advised strongly in favor of “Groseillette,” which Marowsko thought admirable.

Then he lapsed into silence, and remained for several minutes seated under the single gas-jet without saying a word.

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\* “Groseille” being French for “currant.”

"Something strange happened to us this evening," said Pierre at last, almost in spite of himself. "One of my father's friends has died, and left his fortune to my brother."

The druggist did not at first seem to understand, but, after reflection, hoped that the



doctor would get half. When the affair had been fully explained, he seemed surprised and vexed, and as an expression of his dissatisfaction at seeing his young friend sacrificed, he kept repeating :

"It will not have a good effect."

Pierre, whose lassitude was again getting the upper hand of him, wanted to know what

the old man meant. What evil could come from his brother's having inherited a fortune from a friend of the family? But the worthy man, circumspect in his day and generation, would not explain.

"In such a case, it is usual to leave to both brothers equally. I tell you it will not have a good effect."

And the doctor, out of patience, went away, returned to the paternal roof, and retired for the night.

For some time he could hear Jean softly walking up and down the adjoining room; then he slept, after having drunk two glasses of water.

III.

THE FAMILY DINNER.





### III.

THE doctor awoke next day with a settled determination to make his fortune.

He had already come to this decision several times before, but without acting upon it. At the outset of all his attempts to enter upon a new career, the hope of becoming suddenly wealthy had buoyed him up and kept him in heart until he had encountered the first obstacles, which would at once turn him in some new direction.

Cosily ensconced in his warm bed, he meditated. How many physicians had be-

come millionnaires in less than no time ! All that was needed was a grain of *savoir faire*, for, in the course of his studies, he had gauged the most celebrated professors of the healing art and set them down as ninnies. Surely he was as clever as they, if not more so ! If he could manage in some way to capture the patronage of the wealthy and fashionable in Havre, he would be able to make 100,000 frs. a year easily. And he ran over items of this imposing income. In the morning he would call on his patients. Taking the very lowest average, he would make ten visits a day, which, at 20 frs. each, would give him 72,000 frs. a year, or more probably 75,000 frs., since he would be certain to be called to see more than ten patients. In the afternoon he would devote himself to office practice ; and, if he only received ten visits at ten francs, he would have 36,000 frs. at the end of the year. Thus he would have an income of 120,000 frs., in round numbers. Former patrons and friends whom he would call on for ten francs a visit, and for whom he would prescribe at his

office for five francs, might slightly diminish this total ; but this again would be made up by consultations with other physicians and the numerous petty perquisites of the profession.

Nothing easier than to reach this point by dint of skilful if indirect advertising—the insertion of paragraphs in the *Figaro* calling attention to the fact that the whole body of Paris savants had their eyes fixed on him, and were deeply interested in the surprising cures performed by the young and modest physician of Havre. He would be richer than his brother—richer and celebrated—and satisfied with himself, for he would be the architect of his own fortune, and would prove generous to his aged parents, who would be justly proud of his renown. He would not marry, not caring to embarrass himself with one exacting woman ; but he would have intimate friends among the prettiest of his women patrons.

By this time he felt so sure of success that he sprang out of bed as if intent on at once clutching it, and dressed himself in order to

hasten out and search for a suite of rooms that would suit him.

Then, rambling about the streets, he thought how insignificant are the trifles that sometimes affect our most important actions. For three weeks he had been hesitating about taking some decided step, when this course suddenly occurs to him—doubtless as a consequence of his brother's having received a legacy.

He stopped before the doors by the side of which were written announcements of "beautiful" or "luxurious" apartments, or of "apartments" pure and simple, the latter only inspiring his contempt. Then he inspected several with much hauteur, measured the height of ceilings, sketched on his memorandum book the arrangement of the rooms, made a minute as to how they communicated, and the exits, announcing that he was a physician and received many visits. The staircase must be large and well kept; he could not go higher up than one flight.

After taking seven or eight addresses and scribbling down a mass of information, he

returned to breakfast a quarter of an hour late.

In the vestibule he heard the rattling of dishes. Could they have begun without him? Why? Meals were never very punctual in that household. He felt hurt and dissatisfied, as he was a little sensitive. As soon as he entered the room his father said to him :

“Come, Pierre, make haste! You know we are going to the notary’s at two. This is not the day for dawdling.”

The doctor sat down without replying, after having kissed his mother and pressed the hands of his father and brother. He then took from the dish in the centre of the table the cutlet that had been left for him. It was cold and dry. It was also probably the poorest. He thought that it might have been left in the oven until his arrival, and that they should not have so completely forgotten the other son—the eldest. The conversation that had been interrupted by his entrance was continued.

“As for me,” said Madame Roland to Jean, “this is what I should do, and at once. I

should take showy apartments—something striking; I would go into society, buy a horse, and select one or two interesting cases to plead, thus securing a foothold at the Palace. I would seek to be a kind of amateur advocate, who would be much sought after. Thank Heaven! you are beyond the reach of want, and if you follow a profession, it will be in order not to lose the fruits of your studies, and because no man should remain idle.”

Père Roland, who was peeling a pear, said :  
“ *Cristi!* In your place I should buy a fine craft—a cutter, built on the model of our pilot boats—and should sail as far as Sénégal.”

Pierre, in his turn, gave an opinion. It was to the effect that a man’s intellectual or moral worth did not depend on his fortune. To those of only moderate intelligence money was too often the cause of their degradation, while in the hands of the strong it was a powerful lever. The latter, however, were rare. If Jean was really a man above the average, he would now be able to give proof of it, since he found himself beyond the

reach of misfortune. But he would have to work a hundred times harder than he would have been called upon to do under ordinary circumstances. It was not a question of pleading for, or against, the widow and orphan, and of pocketing a certain number of crowns for a case won, or lost ; but of becoming an eminent jurist—a legal luminary !

And he added in conclusion :

“ If I had money, I should carve with it—cut up dead bodies ! ”

Père Roland shrugged his shoulders :

“ Tra, la, la ! The wisest thing to do with life is to let it glide gently along. We are not beasts of burden, but men. When one is born to poverty, one must work—and, so much the worse, one works ; but when one has an income, one would be a ninny to injure his constitution unnecessarily.”

“ Our tendencies are not the same,” replied Pierre with dignity. “ As for me, all that I respect in the world is knowledge and intellect—everything else is contemptible.”

As Madame Roland always endeavored to break the force of the collisions that were

constantly occurring between father and son, on the present occasion she turned the drift of the conversation by referring to a murder that had been committed the week previous at Bolbec-Hointot. The attention of the family was soon occupied by the details of the tragedy, their atrocity, and the attractive mystery inseparable from even vulgar, scandalous, and loathsome crimes—a mystery that exercises a strange and fascinating power over the imagination.

Père Roland, however, frequently consulted his watch.

“Come,” he said, “it is time to be going.”

“It is not one yet,” was Pierre’s sarcastic comment. “As there is an abundance of time, it was scarcely worth while to give me a cold cutlet to eat.”

“Are you coming to the notary’s with us?” asked his mother.

“What should I do there? My presence is entirely unnecessary.”

Jean remained as silent as if he were in no way interested in the matter. When the Bolbec murder had been discussed, he had



laid down certain legal principles, and made certain points regarding crimes and criminals. Now he had relapsed into silence ; but the brilliancy of his eyes, his red cheeks, and even the glistening of his beard seemed to proclaim his happiness.

After the family had set out, Pierre, finding himself again alone, continued his morning's search among the furnished apartments. After two or three hours of ascending and descending stairs, he finally discovered, on the Boulevard François I., something really desirable—a large *entresol* with doors opening on two different streets, two salons, a glass-covered gallery where patients, while waiting, might stroll about among the flowers, and a delicious dining-room built like a rotunda, and looking out on the sea.

Just as he was about taking it, the rent—three thousand francs—made him hesitate, as the first quarter must be paid in advance, and he had nothing in the way of an income—not even a sou.

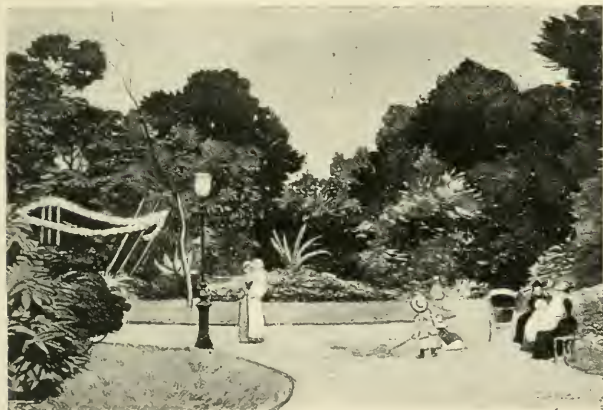
The small fortune that his father had been able to put aside did not yield quite eight

thousand francs a year, and Pierre had often reproached himself for having caused his parents embarrassment by his indecision regarding his choice of a profession, his invariably abandoned experiments, and his continual taking up of new studies. He therefore let the matter stand, promising a decision in two days. Meantime it occurred to him that he might ask his brother to advance the money for the first three or even six months—fifteen hundred francs—as soon as the latter should come into possession of his legacy.

“That would only be a few months’ loan at the longest,” he thought. “I should probably repay it even before the end of the year. Nothing would be more natural, and he would be glad to be able to accommodate me.”

As it was not yet four o’clock, and he had nothing, absolutely nothing to do, he sauntered into the Jardin Public and sat down. There he remained on his bench, not even giving himself the trouble to think, his eyes fixed on the ground, the prey of a feeling of lassitude that was fast developing into real pain.

Still he had passed all the preceding days in this way since his return to the paternal roof, without suffering as he was now doing from the void in his life and from inaction.



How had he been able to pass the hours from the time he rose until bedtime?

He had lounged on the pier when the tide came in, lounged on the streets, lounged in the cafés, lounged at Marowsko's, lounged everywhere. And now this kind of life, that had

seemed tolerable enough up to the present time, had become hateful to him. If he had had money he would have taken a carriage and gone on a long drive in the country by the side of the farm boundaries shaded by beeches and oaks ; but he was forced to count the price of a glass of beer or a postage-stamp, and such extravagance was not within his means. It suddenly occurred to him how hard it was, when a man is past thirty, to be obliged from time to time to blushingly ask his mother for a louis, and he muttered to himself as he scratched the gravel with his cane :

“ *Cristi !* if I only had money.”

And the thought of his brother's legacy again came to him like the sting of a wasp ; but he dismissed it impatiently, not wishing to surrender himself to envy.

Children were playing around him in the dust of the paths. They had long, light hair, and carefully constructed imposing mountains of sand, only to tumble them down, as soon as made, with a kick of the foot.

Pierre had fallen upon one of those depressing days when one searches all the corners of one's soul and shakes out all the folds.

"Our own tasks," he reflected, "resemble the industry of these youngsters." Then he asked himself whether it were not the wisest course in life to beget two or three of these little, useless beings, and watch them grow up with a pleased curiosity. And the desire to marry came to him. One would at least hear some one moving about in the hours of trouble and uncertainty ; it is something to be able to say "thou " to a woman when one is suffering.

He began to think about women. He knew them but slightly, his *liaisons* in the Latin Quarter having seldom lasted more than a fortnight, being broken off when the month's allowance had been exhausted, and continued or replaced by a new one when the next remittance arrived. There must, however, be kind creatures—very good, very gentle, and very consoling. Had not his mother brought good sense and simple pleas-

ures to his father's fireside? How he would like to meet a woman—a real woman!

He rose suddenly with a resolution to call on Madame Rosémilly. Then he sat down again as suddenly. She was displeasing to him. Why? She had too much good sense—vulgar and sordid; besides, did she not appear to prefer Jean? Without admitting it in so many words, this preference counted for much in his low estimate of the widow's intelligence; for, although he loved his brother, he could not help considering him rather commonplace intellectually, and as inferior to himself.

He did not intend, however, to remain there until nightfall, and, as on the previous evening, he anxiously asked himself, "What shall I do?"

He now felt within him the necessity of being petted, embraced, and consoled. But consoled for what? He could not have told; but he was passing through one of those periods of weakness and lassitude in which the presence of a woman, the caresses of a woman, the touch of a hand, the grazing of

a dress, a glance from eyes blue, or black, seem suddenly indispensable to our hearts.

And the recollection came to him of an attendant in a wine-shop who had one evening taken him home, and whom he had seen again from time to time.

He again rose to go and drink a "bock" with this girl. What should he say to her? What would she say to him? Nothing, no doubt; but what did it matter? He would hold her hand a moment. She seemed to have taken a fancy to him. Why, then, did he not see her oftener?

He found her taking a nap on a chair in the almost deserted wine-shop. Three customers were smoking their pipes, leaning over the oak tables; the cashier was reading a novel; while the proprietor, in his shirt-sleeves, was asleep on the bench.

As soon as she saw him the girl rose quickly and came forward, saying:

"Good day: how goes it?"

"All right; and you?"

"Oh! very well. What a stranger you are!"

"Yes, I have but little time to myself ; you know I'm a physician."

"Yes? but why didn't you tell me so before? If I had only known it, I would have consulted you when I was ailing last week. What will you take?"

"A beer ; and you?"

"I'll have one, too, as you pay for it."

Then, sitting down together, they went on talking. Every now and then she would take his hand with the easy familiarity of girls whose affection is for sale. At last, making him the target for her tenderest glances, she said :

"Why don't you come oftener? I like you ever so much, darling."

But he had already had enough of her, and she appeared in his eyes what she really was—stupid, common, and smelling of the people.

"Women," he said to himself, "should come to us only in dreams, or surrounded by the aureole of luxury, that idealizes their vulgarity."

"You passed here the other morning with





THE BEER-HOUSE.



a handsome light-haired gentleman with a long beard," she remarked ; " was it your brother ? "

" Yes, it was my brother."

" He is awfully good-looking."

" You think so ? "

" Certainly ; and he looks as if he lived well."

What uncontrollable impulse suddenly urged Pierre to tell this wine-shop waitress of Jean's legacy ? Why did the story, that he would have forced back had he been alone, come to his lips at that instant, and why did he allow it to make its way out from between his lips as if he felt compelled to relieve his heart, swollen with bitterness, before some one ?

" He's a lucky fellow, my brother," he said as he crossed his legs ; " he's just fallen heir to an income of twenty thousand francs."

She opened wide her blue, covetous eyes.

" And who left it to him ? His grandmother, or his aunt ? "

" No, an old friend of my parents."

"Only a friend? Impossible. And you didn't get anything?"

"No; I scarcely knew him."

She thought a moment, and then, with a peculiar smile, said:

"Well, your brother is fortunate in having friends like that. No wonder he doesn't look at all like you."

His first impulse was to slap her face, without exactly knowing why; but he only asked, in a constrained way:

"What do you mean?"

"Me?—oh, nothing," she replied with affected ingenuousness; "only he's luckier than you."

He threw twenty sous on the table, and went out.

Then he kept repeating the phrase: "No wonder he doesn't look at all like you." What was she thinking of? What hidden meaning lay concealed in these words? They were certainly inspired by malice and spitefulness. They were insulting. Yes, the girl must have thought that Jean was Maréchal's son.

The emotion that this slur on his mother's

good name aroused in him was so violent, that he stopped and looked about for some place to sit down.

He saw another café opposite, went in, took a chair, and ordered beer.

He felt his heart beat ; cold chills ran over him. Suddenly he remembered what Marowsko had said the day before : “ It will not have a good effect.” Had the same thought—the same suspicion—occurred to him and to this hussy ?

Leaning over his beer-glass, he watched the white foam rise and melt, while he asked himself :

“ Can people really believe a thing like that ? ”

The reasons that gave rise to this odious hypothesis in the minds of others now appeared to him, in their order, clear, evident, exasperating. That an old bachelor without heirs should leave his fortune to the two children of a friend—nothing seemed simpler or more natural ; but when he gave the whole of it to one only, no doubt the world would at first be surprised, then gossip, and

finally laugh. Why had he not foreseen it? Why had his father not had an inkling of it? Why had his mother not suspected it? No, they were too happy over this unexpected windfall; such a thought would not occur to them. Besides, how could these worthy people imagine that society would be so censorious?

But the public, the neighbors, the tradesmen, all who knew them—would they not repeat this odious slander, laugh and jest over it, ridiculing his father, and despising his mother?

And the remark made by the wine-shop girl, that Jean was light and he dark, that they did not resemble each other either in face, gait, figure, or mind, would likewise occur to every one. When, therefore, Roland's son was referred to, people would ask: "Which, the real or the false one?"

He got up, having decided that his brother must be warned—put on his guard against the terrible danger that threatened their mother's honor. But what would Jean do? The simplest way out of the difficulty would

be to refuse the legacy, which would then go to the poor, and to say to friends and acquaintances who had heard of the will, that the latter contained objectionable clauses and conditions, that would have made Jean not an heir, but a trustee.

On his way home, he decided that he ought to see his brother alone, so as not to be compelled to speak on such a subject before his parents.

As he opened the door he heard the sound of voices and laughter in the salon, and on entering that apartment he discovered that his father had brought back with them Madame Rosémilly and Captain Beausire to dinner in honor of the joyful occasion.

Vermouth and absinthe were handed around to excite an appetite, and the party were already in the best of spirits. Captain Beausire, a little roly-poly kind of man, whose angles had been rounded off by much rolling about on salt water, and whose ideas seemed as little angular as his body—like pebbles on the beach—who gave the full value of the “r” in laughing, seemed to con-

sider life a very good thing to take, and that no portion of it should be neglected.

He clinked glasses with Père Roland, while Jean filled those of the ladies a second time.

Madame Rosémilly refused, when Captain Beausire, who had known her husband, exclaimed :

“ Come, come, madame, *bis repetita placent*, as we say in *patois*, which signifies : ‘ Two Vermouths can’t do one any harm.’ Now I, since I no longer follow the sea, I give myself, every day before dinner, two or three of those artificial ‘ rolls.’ I supplement them with a little ‘ pitching ’ after the coffee, which makes the sea rise during the rest of the evening. However, I never go the length of raising a ‘ tempest,’ never, never, never, for I fear ‘ shipwreck.’ ”

Roland, whose passion for the sea was thus flattered by the old sailor, was already red in the face and unsteady of gaze, owing to the absinthe. He had the pot-belly of the petty shopkeeper—a capacious abdomen in which all the rest of his body appeared to have been absorbed—one of those soft, yielding corpora-



tions to which men who sit a great deal are subject, and who have neither thighs, chest, arms, nor neck—all their corporeal belongings being apparently heaped up on the seat of their chair.

Beausire, on the contrary, although short and stout, was as well-proportioned as an egg, and as hard as a ball.

Madame Roland had not yet finished her first glass ; and rosy with happiness, her eyes shining, she was lost in the contemplation of her son Jean.

His cup of enjoyment seemed at length to be full. The affair was concluded, the papers had been signed, and now he had an income of twenty thousand francs. By the way in which he laughed, from his speaking with fuller, more sonorous tones than was his wont, from his more decided manner and his greater degree of assurance, it was evident that he already had acquired the self-poise that money brings.

Dinner was announced, and as old Roland was about to offer his arm to Madame Rosémilly, his wife interposed :

“No, no, father, to-day everything is for Jean.”

The table groaned under unaccustomed plenty. Before Jean's plate, who had been promoted to his father's place, a huge bouquet with silk favors—such as only grace very ceremonious occasions—rose like a flag-decorated dome. On its flanks were four fruit dishes, the first of which contained a pyramid of superb peaches ; the second, a monumental cake filled with whipped cream, and covered with bells made of melted sugar—a real cathedral ; the third, slices of pineapples in a white sirup ; and the fourth—unheard-of extravagance—black grapes brought from the hot countries.

“*Bigre !*” said Pierre, seating himself. “We seem to be celebrating the occasion of Jean le Riche !”

After the soup, Madeira was served, and everybody began to talk at once. Beausire told of a dinner that he had eaten in Saint Domingo, at the table of a negro general. Père Roland listened to him, but endeavored to get in edgeways a story of his own about a

certain repast given by one of his friends at Meudon, as a consequence of having partaken of which every guest had to pay the penalty of a fortnight's illness. Madame Rosémilly, Jean, and his mother talked over a proposed excursion to Saint Jouin, and a breakfast there, from which they promised themselves much unalloyed pleasure ; while Pierre bitterly regretted not having dined alone, at a cheap seaside restaurant, where he would have escaped all the noise, laughter, and joyful manifestations that were unmanning him.

He reflected as to how he should manage to communicate his fears to his brother, and to induce him to give up the fortune that he had already accepted, that he was even now enjoying, and that was exercising its intoxicating influence upon him. It would no doubt be hard for him, but the necessity was there ; he could not hesitate since their mother's good name was at stake.

The appearance of an enormous mullet started Roland off into a series of tales about fishing. Beausire matched them with won-

derful adventures at Gaboon, at Sainte Marie, in Madagascar, and, particularly, on the coasts of China and Japan, where, he declared, the fish had faces as comical as those of the inhabitants. And he described the appearance of the former, their great, golden eyes, their blue or red bellies, their queer fins, like fans, their crescent-shaped tails—so vividly and with so much humor that his hearers laughed until tears stood in their eyes.

Pierre alone seemed incredulous, and muttered to himself :

“No wonder that the Normans are called the Gascons of the North !”

After the fish came a “vol-au-vent,” then a roast chicken, a salad, kidney beans, and a pâté of Pithiviers larks. Madame de Rosémilly’s maid assisted in waiting on the table, and the general good humor sensibly increased with each successive glass of wine. When the cork of the first bottle of champagne popped, Père Roland, greatly excited, and imitating the sound with his lips, exclaimed :

“ I like that better than the sound of a pistol.”

Pierre, still more and more out of humor, replied with a sneer :

“ Still it may be more dangerous for you.”

Roland, who was about to drink, replaced his full glass on the table, and asked :

“ How so ? ”

For some time past he had been complaining of his health—of torpor, giddiness, and certain constant and inexplicable unpleasant sensations. The doctor replied :

“ Because the pistol-ball might miss you ; but the wine goes straight into your stomach.”

“ And then ? ”

“ And then it burns in the stomach, disorganizes the nervous system, renders the circulation sluggish, and paves the way for apoplexy, with which all men of your temperament are threatened.”

The fumes of increasing intoxication that had gradually been overpowering the jeweller were suddenly dispersed as by a gust of wind, and he looked at his son with anx-

ious, restless eyes, endeavoring to make out whether he was not jesting.

“Oh, these plaguey doctors !” exclaimed Beausire ; “ they’re all just alike. You mustn’t eat, you mustn’t drink, or make love, or dance round dances ! It is all detrimental to your precious health. Well, I’ve done everything they forbid in all parts of the world, wherever I could, and as often as I could, and I don’t see that I’m any the worse for it.”

“ In the first place, captain,” replied Pierre, with a touch of sarcasm in his voice, “ you’re stronger than my father ; and, besides, all the good livers talk just as you do until the day when—— and they never return to say to the prudent medical adviser : ‘ You were right, doctor.’ When I see my father do precisely what he ought not to do, what is most dangerous for him to do, it is only natural that I should warn him. A pretty son I should be if I did not.”

“ Come, Pierre,” interrupted Madame Roland, greatly annoyed, “ what is the matter with you ? Once can’t do him any harm. Think what an occasion it is for him—for us all !

You will spoil his pleasure and ours, too. You are very ill-natured."

"Let him do what he wants to," Pierre muttered to himself, shrugging his shoulders ; "I've warned him."

But Père Roland did not drink. He looked at his glass full of clear, sparkling wine, whose intoxicating essence was coming to the surface in minute bubbles that were pressing eagerly, rapidly upwards, and bursting as they reached the air. He looked at it with the distrust of the fox that has found a dead fowl, but suspects a trap.

"You think that would do me much harm?" he asked hesitatingly.

Pierre was touched with a feeling of compunction, and upbraided himself for having caused others to suffer for his ill-humor.

"No, go ahead," he said, "you may drink this time ; but don't abuse the privilege, and don't make a practice of it."

Then Père Roland raised his glass, but without having quite decided whether he would drink or not. He again looked at it in a woe-begone fashion, at once desirous

and fearful ; then he smelt it, tasted it, sipped it, keeping the wine in his mouth, but all the time the prey of many an anxious thought, distracted by weakness and the desire to gratify his palate, and filled with regret as soon as the last drop had vanished.

All at once Pierre met the eye of Madame Rosémilly. It was fixed on him—clear, blue, penetrating, and stern. He at once divined the meaning of the look—the irritation that had possessed the simple-minded, straightforward little woman, for her glance said to him :

“You are envious ; that is disgraceful.”

He bent down his head, and went on eating. But he was not hungry, and nothing pleased him. He was tormented by a desire to go away from these people, so that he would no longer hear them talking, jesting, and laughing.

Meantime Père Roland, the fumes of the wine having again gone to his head, had already forgotten his son's advice, and was looking askance at a bottle of champagne,



still nearly full, that had been left by the side of his plate. He dared not touch it, for fear of receiving another admonition, and he was therefore meditating by what means he could gain possession of it without attracting Pierre's attention. Finally he decided in favor of the most natural course possible. He raised the bottle carelessly, stretched across the table, and first filled the doctor's glass, which happened to be empty ; then he made the round of the table, and when he came back to his own, he began talking very loud, so as to distract the attention of the company from what he was doing. If he poured a little wine into his glass, and it was noticed, every one would have declared that it had been done inadvertently. However, no one seemed to notice him.

Pierre, without thinking of what he was doing, drank a good deal. Nervous and annoyed, he frequently, but unconsciously, raised his long crystal glass to his lips—the flute-like goblet in which the transparent liquid was bubbling. He let it run slowly

down his throat, so as to catch the twang of the evaporated gas on his tongue.

Gradually a pleasant warmth spread over his body. Starting from the stomach, from which centre it seemed to radiate, it overspread the chest, took possession of the limbs, diffused itself throughout his entire being, like a tepid, gracious wave bringing with it joy and comfort. He already felt better, less impatient, less discontented ; even his resolution to speak to his brother that very evening was weakened—not that he had gone so far as to think of abandoning his intention, but he was not anxious to disturb his newly found serenity.

At last Beausire rose to propose a toast. Having bowed all around, he said :

“ Very gracious ladies and gentlemen : We have met to celebrate a happy event in the life of one of our friends. It was formerly said that Fortune was blind : I believe that she was only short-sighted, or malicious, and that she has just purchased an excellent pair of marine glasses, which have enabled her to make out in the port of Havre the son of



MADAME ROSÉMILLY'S TOAST.



our gallant comrade Roland, captain of the *Pearl*."

"Bravos" sprung to all lips, enforced by much clapping of hands, and Père Roland was happy.

After coughing, for he felt husky, and his tongue was somewhat unwieldy, he stammered out these words :

"Thanks, captain, thanks for myself and for my son. I shall never forget your conduct on the present occasion. I drink to your wishes."

His eyes and his nose being both full of tears, he sat down, not thinking of anything more to say.

Jean, who was laughing, took the floor :

"It is I who should thank the devoted, the worthy" (here he looked at Madame Rosémilly) "friends who have to-day given me this touching proof of their affection. But it is not by words that I can testify my gratitude. I shall prove it to-morrow, every instant of my life—always ; for our friendship is not of the kind that passes away."

"Well said, my child !" murmured his

mother, much affected : but Beausire exclaimed :

“Come, Madame Rosémilly, say something in behalf of the ladies.”

She raised her glass, and in a gentle voice, a little tinged with sadness, she said :

“I drink to the blessed memory of M. Maréchal.”

There was a pause for a few seconds—a pause for contemplation, as after a prayer. Then Beausire, who was handy at compliments, remarked :

“It takes the women to do a thing delicately.”

Then turning to Père Roland, he said :

“But, after all, who was this Maréchal ? You were very intimate with him, were you not ?”

The old man, somewhat maudlin in his cups, began to shed tears, and in disjointed sentences explained :

“A brother—you know—one of those we don’t meet with any more—we were never separated—he dined with us every evening—and he paid for our seats at the theatre—I

can't say any more than that—than that—than that. A friend—a true—true—wasn't he, Louise?"

"Yes, a faithful friend," replied his wife simply.

Pierre looked at his father and mother, but, as the conversation turned to other subjects, he began to drink again.

As to the rest of the evening he remembered little or nothing. The company had taken coffee, imbibed liqueurs, and laughed immoderately at their own jests. He retired toward midnight, his mind confused and his head heavy, and slept like a log until nine the next morning.







IV.

WHY WAS JEAN PREFERRED?



#### IV.

THIS slumber, steeped in champagne and chartreuse, without doubt soothed and calmed him, for he awoke in a very kindly disposition of mind. As he dressed himself he examined, weighed, and summed up the emotions of the preceding evening, and sought to disentangle from them, clearly and completely, the real secret causes, the personal causes as well as external causes.

It was, in fact, quite possible that the girl in the beer-shop had conceived a vile idea, the real idea of a harlot, on learning that only

one of the sons of Roland had received a legacy from an unknown person. Have not such creatures always such suspicions, without the shadow of a motive, about every honest woman? Do they not, whenever they talk, insult, calumniate, defame, every woman whom they imagine to be beyond reproach? Whenever an unimpeachable character is mentioned in their presence, they are annoyed as if they were abused, and cry, "Ah, yes, indeed, I know your married women—models of propriety. They have more lovers than we, only they conceal them because they are hypocrites. Oh, yes; models of propriety!"

Under any other circumstances, he certainly would not have listened to, nor even supposed possible, such insinuations against his poor mother, so good, so simple, so worthy. But his soul was troubled by the leaven of jealousy fermenting in him. And in his over-excited state, on the watch, in spite of himself, for anything which might be of detriment to his brother, he had perhaps attributed to this seller of beer odious mean-

ings which she did not have. It was possible that his imagination alone, the imagination which he did not govern and which incessantly escaped from his resolutions, was straying and roaming in daring and hazardous cunning in the infinite universe of ideas, and bringing thence shameful thoughts, never to be avowed, which it hid away in him in the depth of his soul, as in some unsounded abyss, like something stolen. It might be that his imagination alone created and invented this horrible doubt. His heart assuredly, his own heart, had its secrets; and this wounded heart perhaps had found in this abominable doubt a means of depriving his brother of the inheritance that he envied. He suspected himself, at present; and, as devotees interrogate their conscience, he questioned all the mysteries of his thoughts.

Certainly Madame Rosémilly, limited as was her intelligence, had the tact, the keen and subtile scent, of women. But this idea had never occurred to her, for she drank, in perfect sincerity, to the blessed memory of M. Maréchal. She would not have done so,

if the slightest suspicion had touched her. Now, he no longer doubted, his involuntary discontent at the fortune that had fallen to his brother, and also, assuredly, his religious love for his mother, had intensified his scruples—pious and honorable scruples indeed, but exaggerated.

On arriving at this conclusion, he had a feeling of content as at the accomplishment of a good action, and he resolved to show himself amiable to all the world, and in the first place to his father, whose whims, stupid assertions, vulgar notions, and too visible mediocrity incessantly irritated him.

He did not come in too late for breakfast, and he amused all the family by his wit and good-humor.

His mother, delighted, said to him :

“ Dear Pierre, you do not think what fun and wit you have when you like.”

And he talked on, now in epigrams, now provoking laughter by his ingenious sketches of their friends. Beausire was his butt, and at times Madame Rosémilly ; but her he treated in a discreet fashion, not too mis-

chievously. And he thought as he looked at his brother : "Stand up for her, then, stupid. It is all very well your being rich, but I shall eclipse you whenever I choose."

Over the coffee he said to his father :

"Are you going to use the *Pearl* to-day ?"

"No, my boy."

"Can I take her and Jean Bart ?"

"Oh, yes, whenever you like."

He bought a good cigar at the first tobacconist he came to, and, with a joyous air, went down to the harbor.

He looked at the clear and luminous sky of delicate blue, refreshed and bathed by the sea-breeze.

Papagris, the sailor, called commonly Jean Bart, was asleep at the bottom of the boat, which it was his duty to have ready for sailing every day at noon when there was no fishing party in the morning.

"Only ourselves, skipper," cried Pierre, as he descended the iron ladder from the quay and leaped into the boat.

"What wind ?" he asked.

“Due east, Master Pierre. We’ll have a good breeze in the offing.”

He hoisted the foresail, and raised the anchor ; and the skiff, unmoored, began to glide gently toward the jetty on the calm water of the harbor. The light breath of wind through the streets struck the top of the sail so gently that it was imperceptible, and the *Pearl* seemed endowed with a life of its own—the life of ships urged on by mysterious and hidden force. Pierre took the tiller, and, cigar in mouth, his legs stretched out on the seat, his eyes half closed under the blinding rays of the sun, watched, as they were passed in succession, the huge tarred timbers of the breakwaters.

When they came out to the open sea, on reaching the point of the north jetty, which sheltered them, the freshening breeze touched the face and hands of the doctor like a cool caress, penetrated into his chest, which he inflated with a long breath, to inhale it, and, filling the brown sail that bellied out, gave the *Pearl* a list to leeward, and made her more lively.





Jean Bart quickly hoisted the jib, and its triangle, filled with the wind, looked like a wing. Then, taking two strides aft, he threw loose the driver which was lashed to its mast.

The boat abruptly heeled over, and, as she flew on at full speed, there came from the side the soft, brisk sound of water bubbling and flying away.

The stem cut the sea like the share of a strange plough, and the waves it raised, in

white curves of foam, swelled up and fell back just as the heavy brown furrow of the fields falls back.

Every wave they encountered—and they were short and close together—gave the *Pearl* a shock from the jibboom to the rudder, which quivered in Pierre's hands ; and when the wind, for some seconds, blew stronger, the water skimmed the gunwale as if it would invade the boat. A steam-collier from Liverpool was at anchor, waiting for the tide ; they passed under her stern, and then visited the ships in the roadstead, one after the other, and then stood farther out a little to see the coast unfold.

For three hours Pierre, in calm and motionless content, went hither and thither on the rippling water, steering like some winged creature, swift and obedient, this thing of wood and canvas that came and went, submissive to his caprices, at a pressure of his hand.

He was plunged in reverie—such reverie as comes to one on horseback or on a ship's deck. He thought of his future, which was

to be prosperous, and of the pleasure of a life of intelligence. To-morrow he would ask his brother to lend him, for three months, fifteen hundred francs, to start him at once in the pretty suite of rooms in the Boulevard François I.

The sailor, all at once, said :

“Here’s the fog, Master Pierre. Better put about.”

He raised his eyes, and saw in the north a gray, profound, and thin shadow, that bathed the sky, and covered the sea, and was coming toward them like a cloud fallen from on high.

He went about, and with the wind astern directed his course to the jetty, followed by the driving fog, which gained on him. When it reached the *Pearl*, and enveloped it in its imperceptible density, a cold chill ran through Pierre’s limbs ; and a smoky, mouldy odor, the strange odor of sea-fog, made him close his mouth, not to taste this damp and icy cloud. When the boat reached its accustomed place in the port, the whole town was already buried in the fine vapor, which, without fall-

ing, wet like rain, and spread over the houses and streets like an overflowing river.

Pierre, with his hands and feet chilled, made haste home, and flung himself on his bed to sleep till dinner-time. When he entered the dining-room, his mother was saying to Jean :

“The gallery will be charming. We will put some flowers there. You’ll see. I will take on myself to attend to them and renew them. When you give a party, it will be a fairy scene.”

“What are you speaking about ?” the doctor asked.

“A delightful suite of rooms I have just rented for your brother—a real treasure, an *entresol* looking on two streets. It contains two reception-rooms, a glazed gallery, and a little round dining-room, all together quite lovely for a bachelor.”

Pierre grew pale. A burst of wrath seized his heart.

“Where is it ?” he said.

“Boulevard François I.”

He doubted no longer, and took his seat,

so exasperated that he longed to cry out, "This is too much ! There is nothing save for him !"

His mother, radiant with pleasure, continued :

"And, fancy, I got it for two thousand eight hundred francs. They asked three thousand, but I obtained a reduction of two hundred francs, by taking a lease for three, six, or nine years. Your brother will be admirably settled there. An elegant set of rooms is necessary to make a lawyer's fortune. It attracts clients, dazzles and keeps them ; it inspires them with respect, and lets them understand that a man living in such style makes them pay dear for his words."

She was silent for a few seconds, and resumed :

"We must find something like it for you, but more modest, as you have nothing—still very nice, all the same."

Pierre replied in an indignant tone : "For me ! It will be by work and science that I shall succeed."

His mother persisted :

“Yes, but I assure you a pretty apartment will be of much service, all the same.”

About the middle of the meal, he asked abruptly :

“How did you make the acquaintance of Maréchal?”

M. Roland raised his head, and began to examine his recollections.

“Wait, I do not remember very well. It is so long ago. Oh, yes, I know! Your mother made his acquaintance in the shop—was not that the way, Louise? He came to order something, and often came back. We knew him as a customer before knowing him as a friend.”

Pierre, who was eating French beans, and sticking the point of his fork into them one after the other, as if he would have spitted them, rejoined :

“At what time did you make his acquaintance?”

Roland again tried to recollect, but, recalling nothing, appealed to his wife’s memory :

“What year was it, Louise? You cannot have forgotten, as you have so good a mem-



THE JEWELLER'S SHOP.





ory. Let's see. Was it in—in—in '55 or '56? Just think : you must know better than I do."

She reflected for some time ; then, with a steady and tranquil voice, replied :

"It was in '58. Pierre was then three years old. I am certain I make no mistake, for it was the year when the child had the scarlet fever, and Maréchal, whom we then knew but little, was of great assistance to us."

Roland exclaimed :

"True, true, he was wonderfully kind. When your mother was worn out with fatigue, and I was busy in the shop, he went to the druggist's to bring the medicines. He had, indeed, a noble heart. And when you were well again, you cannot imagine how happy he was, and how he kissed you. It was from that time that we became great friends."

Then with abrupt violence this thought entered Pierre's mind, like a ball that perforates and lacerates : "Since he knew me first, was so devoted to me, loved and kissed me so fondly ; since I was the cause of the great

intimacy with my parents—why did he leave all his fortune to my brother and nothing to me ? ”

He asked no more questions, and remained in a sombre mood of absorption rather than of thought, nursing a new, as yet undefined disquiet, the secret germ of a new evil.

He left the house early, and began again to roam the streets. They were buried in the fog, which rendered the night heavy, opaque, and sickening. It might have been called a pestilential vapor descended to earth. It could be seen streaming past the gas-lights, which it seemed momentarily to extinguish. The street pavements became slippery, as on evenings when *verglas* coats them, and all evil odors seemed to come out of the houses—stinks from cellars, from gutters, from spouts, from filthy kitchens—and mingle in this horrible stench of the reeking mist.

Pierre, his shoulders rounded, and his hands in his pockets, did not wish to remain longer out of doors in the cold, and went to call on Marowsko.

The old druggist was still sleeping under

the gas-light of his store. When he recognized Pierre, whom he loved with the love of a faithful dog, he shook off his torpor, went to look for his glasses, and brought out his liqueur.

"Well," asked the doctor, "how are you coming on with your liqueur?"

The Pole explained that four of the principal cafés of the town had consented to give it a trial, and how the *Phare de la Côte* and the *Sémaphore Havrais* would write it up in exchange for some pharmaceutical products tendered to the editors.

After a long silence, Marowsko asked if Jean was really in possession of his fortune, and put two or three vague questions further on the same subject. His sullen devotion to Pierre revolted against this preference. Pierre believed he could follow his thoughts; he divined, understood, read them in his averted eyes, in the hesitating tone of his voice, in the phrases which rose to his lips, but which he did not utter, and which he would not utter—he so discreet, so timid, so cautious.

He no longer doubted that the old man was thinking : " You ought not to have let him accept this legacy, which will cause evil reports about your mother." Perhaps he even believed that Jean was Maréchal's son. Certainly he believed it. How could he help believing it, as it must appear so probable, so truthlike, so evident ? Had not he himself, Pierre, her son, been struggling for three days with all his force, all the subtle arguments of his heart, to deceive his reason ? Was he not still struggling against this terrible suspicion ?

Once more, suddenly, the necessity of being alone—to think, to discuss with himself, to face boldly, without scruples or feebleness, this theory so possible, and yet so monstrous—dominated him so forcibly, that he rose without even drinking the glass of groseille, shook the astonished druggist by the hand, and plunged into the fog of the streets.

He said to himself, " Why did this man Maréchal leave all his fortune to Jean ? "

It was now no longer jealousy that made him ask this ; it was no longer that rather

mean and natural envy which he knew was hid in his bosom, and which he had fought against for the last three days : it was the dread of something horrible—the dread of himself believing that Jean, his brother, was the son of that man !

No, he did not believe, he could not even put to himself so criminal a question. This suspicion, however slight, however improbable, must be rejected by him, utterly and forever. He must have light and certainty, he must have complete assurance in his heart, for his mother was all he loved in the world.

As he wandered alone in the night, he would submit his memory and his reason to a minute examination, from which truth in all its splendor would result. That once done, he would think of it no more, never more. He would go to sleep.

He thought : “ Let us see. Let us, first of all, examine the facts : then I will recall all I know of him, his treatment of my brother and me ; I will search all the causes which could possibly have furnished a motive for this preference. He was there when Jean

was born ? Yes, but he knew me before that. If he had entertained a mute, secret love for my mother, he would have preferred me ; for it was through me, thanks to my scarlatina, that he became the intimate friend of my parents. Logically, therefore, he ought to have chosen me, to have had a more vivid affection for me, unless he felt for my brother as he saw him grow up an instinctive attraction and predilection."

Then with a desperate tension of all his thought, of all his intellectual power, he retraced his recollections, in order to reconstruct, review, recognize, penetrate, this man—the man who had passed before his eyes, indifferent to his heart, during all his years in Paris.

He felt, however, that walking, the slight movement of his steps, somewhat troubled his ideas, disarranged their order, weakened their reach, and obscured his memory.

In order to throw on the past and its unknown events a keen look from which nothing could escape, he must remain motionless, in some wide and desert spot. He decided

to go and sit on the jetty as he had done the other night.

As he drew near the harbor, he heard, in the direction of the open sea, a melancholy, sinister moan, like the bellowing of a bull, but longer and more powerful. It was the cry of a fog-horn, the cry of ships lost in the fog.

A shudder shook his flesh and wrung his heart, such an echo was there in his soul and nerves of that cry of distress, which he fancied he had uttered himself. Another similar voice moaned in its turn, but more in the distance ; then close by, the fog-horn of the harbor, in reply to them, rent the night with its clamorous tone.

Pierre walked quickly to the jetty without further thought, but satisfied to plunge into the lugubrious and bellowing obscurity.

He sat down at the end of the mole, and closed his eyes to avoid the sight of the electric lights, veiled in mist, which rendered the port accessible by night, and of the red light of the light-house on the south jetty, which, however, could scarcely be distinguished.

Then, half turning round, he put his elbows on the granite, and covered his face with his hands.

His mind, without his pronouncing the word with his lips, kept repeating, as if to summon, evoke, and challenge his ghost, "Maréchal—Maréchal," and in the darkness of his closed eyelids he suddenly saw him as he had known him—a man of sixty, wearing a pointed white beard, with heavy eyebrows that were likewise white. He was neither tall nor short, had an affable air, soft gray eyes, a modest bearing, the look of an honest, tender, and simple soul. He called Pierre and Jean "my dear children;" he never appeared to prefer one to the other, and asked them together to dinner.

Pierre, with the tenacity of a hound following a scent that does not lie, began to recall the words, the gestures, the tones, the looks of this man who had disappeared from earth. He recalled him, gradually, quite complete in his rooms in the Rue Tronchet, where he received his brother and himself at table.

Two maids waited on him, both old, who



for a long time past, doubtless, had learned the habit of saying "M. Pierre" and "M. Jean."

Maréchal stretched out both hands to the young people, the right to one, the left to the other, according as they entered.

"Good-day, my children," he would say. "Have you any news of your father and mother? As for me, they never write me a line."

The conversation went on pleasantly and familiarly on common topics. There was nothing extraordinary in the man's nature, but much amenity, charm, and grace. He was certainly a good friend to them—one of those good friends of which one seldom thinks, because they are known to be sure ones.

Memories now began to pour in upon Pierre. Maréchal, seeing him sometimes melancholy, and guessing at his poverty, had offered and lent him money, spontaneously—some hundreds of francs, perhaps, forgotten by both and never repaid. The man, then, always loved him, always took an interest in him, since he was troubled about his needs. Then

—then—why leave all his fortune to Jean? No; he had never been visibly more affectionate to the younger than to the elder, more thoughtful for one than the other, less tender apparently to this one rather than to that. Then—then—he must have had a powerful and secret reason for giving all to Jean—all—and nothing to Pierre.

The more he thought of it, the more he revived the past of late years—the more the doctor considered the difference made between them improbable and incredible.

An acute pang, an inexpressible anguish, entered his breast, and made his heart flutter like a shaken rag. Its springs seemed broken, and the blood passed in in streams, tumultuously shaking and tossing it.

Then, half aloud, as one speaks in a nightmare, he muttered: “I must know, my God, I must know!”

He went back now still further, to the earliest days when his parents lived in Paris. But faces escaped him, and this embroiled his recollections. He was, above all, anxious to recall Maréchal with—blond, chest-

nut, or black hair? He could not : the last appearance of the man when he was old had effaced the others. He remembered, however, that he was slender, that he had a soft hand, and often brought flowers, very often indeed ; for his father would repeat without ceasing : " More bouquets. Why, it is madness, my dear fellow ; you will ruin yourself in roses."

Maréchal replied : " Let me alone ; it gives me great pleasure."

And suddenly the remembrance of his mother's tones, as she smiled and said, " Thanks, my friend," crossed his mind, so distinct that he thought he heard her. She had then pronounced these three words very often, as they were so engraved on the memory of her son !

Maréchal, then, used to bring flowers—he the rich man, the gentleman, the customer—to this little shop-woman, the wife of a small jeweller. Was he her lover? How could he have become the friend of these shop-keepers if he had not been the lover of the wife? He was a man of education and refined

mind. How many times he talked to Pierre of poetry and poets! His appreciation of writers was not that of an artist, but of a commonplace lover of thrilling sentiment. The doctor had often smiled at these languishing moments, which seemed to him rather silly. To-day he understood that this sentimental man could never, never, have been the friend of his father, who was so matter-of-fact, so earthy, so heavy, for whom the word poetry had no meaning.

Maréchal, then, young, free, rich, open to all tender emotions, entered one day by chance a shop, having probably noticed the pretty woman behind the counter. He bought something, came back, and talked day by day more familiarly, buying by his frequent purchases the right to take a seat there, to smile at the young wife, and shake hands with the husband.

And afterwards—afterwards—O God!—afterwards.

He had loved and caressed the first child, the jeweller's child, till the birth of the second; then down to his death he had re-

mained impenetrable ; then, his tomb closed, his body decomposed, his name effaced from the names of the living, disappeared wholly and forever, having nothing more to manage, to dread, or to hide, he left all his fortune to the second child ! Why ? The man had intelligence ; he must have understood and foreseen that he might, that he would almost infallibly, arouse a supposition that this child was his. He would dishonor a woman, then ? How could he have acted thus if Jean had not been his son ?

And suddenly a precise, terrible recollection crossed Pierre's mind. Maréchal was fair-haired, fair as Jean. He remembered now a little miniature which he had seen in Paris on the parlor chimney-piece, once on a time, but which had disappeared at present. Where was it ? Lost or hidden ? Oh, if he could only have possession of it for a second ! His mother, perhaps, had it in the secret drawer where relics of love are locked up.

His agony at this thought became so poignant that he groaned aloud—one of those brief moans torn out of the throat by too

keen anguish. And then, abruptly, as if it heard him, as if it understood his condition and replied to him, the fog-horn on the jetty howled close to him. Its voice—the voice of a supernatural monster, more echoing than thunder, a wild, formidable roar, made to conquer the voice of the winds and waves—spread away in the darkness over the invisible sea buried in the fogs.

Then, through the mist, near and far, similar cries arose again in the night ; terrible were these appealing screams from the huge blind packet-ships.

Again all was still.

Pierre opened his eyes, and stared in surprise at being there, when he was aroused from his nightmare.

“ I am mad,” he thought, “ I suspect my mother.” And a flood of love and tenderness, of repentance, prayer, and desolation, inundated his heart. His mother ! Knowing her as he knew her, how could he suspect her ? Was not the soul, the life, of this simple, chaste, loyal woman more transparent than water ? Any one who saw and knew her could

not but judge her beyond suspicion. And it was he, her son, who doubted her ! Oh, if he could have taken her in his arms at that moment, how he would have embraced and caressed her ! How he would have knelt to her to ask pardon !

Could she have deceived his father ? His father ! Certainly he was an honest man, honorable and upright in his dealings, but his soul had never crossed the horizon of his shop. How could this woman, very pretty once, as he knew, and as could be still seen, endowed with a delicate, affectionate, tender nature, have accepted as her betrothed, and as her husband, a man so different from herself ?

Why seek ? She had married him as a girl marries the lad with money whom her parents present to her. They installed themselves at once in their store in the Rue Montmartre ; and the young woman presiding at the counter, animated by the spirit of her new home, and by that subtle sacred sense of common interest which replaces love and even affection in most of the homes of the

Parisian traders, had begun to work for the expected fortune of the house with all her active and refined intelligence. So her life had passed, uniform, tranquil, honorable, without tenderness.

Without tenderness ! Could a woman not love ? A young pretty woman living at Paris, reading books, applauding actors who die of passion on the stage, could she pass from youth to age without her heart being touched, if only once ? He would not believe it of any other woman—why should he believe it of his mother ?

Certainly she might have loved like others ! for why should she be different from others, although she was his mother ?

She had been young, with all the poetic weaknesses that trouble the heart of the young. Confined and imprisoned in the shop by the side of a vulgar husband who always talked business, she had dreamed of moonlight, of travels, of kisses interchanged in the evening shadows. And then one day a man had entered, as lovers enter in books, and he had spoken as lovers do.





IN THE NIGHT.



She had loved him. Why not? She was his mother. Well, was he to be blind and stupid to the extent of rejecting evidence because his mother was involved?

Had she surrendered? Yes, since the man had had no other mistress; yes, since he had remained faithful to her when she was distant and old; yes, since he had left all his fortune to his son, to their son!

Pierre rose, quivering in such wrath that he would have liked to kill some one. His outstretched arm, his open hand, longed to smite, to slay, to bruise, to choke! Whom? All the world—father, brother, the dead man, his mother!

He started to return home. What would he do?

As he passed before a little tower near the signal pole, the strident scream of the fog-horn struck him in the face. His surprise was so great that he almost fell, and recoiled to the stone parapet. There he sat down, with no more strength left, and broken by this commotion.

The steamer which was the first to answer

seemed quite near, and presented itself at the entrance, the tide being at high water.

Pierre turned and saw its red eye dimmed by the mist. Then, under the diffused gleam of the electric light, a huge black shadow outlined itself between the two jetties. Behind him the voice of the tide-waiter, the hoarse voice of a retired captain, cried :

“Ship ahoy !”

And in the mist, the voice of the pilot standing on the bridge, with equal hoarseness, replied :

“*Santa Lucia.*”

“Where from ?”

“Italy.”

“What port ?”

“Naples.”

Before his troubled eyes Pierre fancied he could see the flame of fire from Vesuvius, while at the foot of the volcano the fireflies were dancing in the orange groves of Sorrento or Castellamare. How often had he dreamed of those familiar names, as if he had known the districts ! If he could but go away, at once, no matter where, and never

come back, never write, never let it be known what had become of him ! But, no ; he must return, return to his paternal home, and sleep in his bed.

So much the worse. He would not return, he would wait till day. The sounds of the fog-horns pleased him. He rose and began to march like an officer keeping his watch on deck.

Behind the first one, another enormous and mysterious ship approached. It was an English ship returning from India.

He saw many more come in, starting one after the other out of the impenetrable darkness. When the dampness of the fog became intolerable, Pierre set off toward the town. He was so cold that he entered a sailor's drinking place to get some grog, and when the hot brandy and pepper burned his palate and throat, he felt hope revive in him.

He had deceived himself, perhaps ? He knew right well his own vacillating irrationality. He had deceived himself beyond doubt. He had accumulated facts as one draws an indictment against an innocent

person, whom it is always easy to condemn when one wishes to believe him guilty. When he had had a sleep, he would think quite differently. Then he went home to bed, and by force of will ending by slumbering.



V

MOTHER AND SON.





## V.

THE limbs of the doctor lay torpid for scarce an hour or two in the agitation of a troubled sleep. When he awoke in the obscurity of his warm and closed room, he felt, even before thought was kindled in him, that doleful oppression, that unrest of soul, which the annoyance on which we have slept leaves in us. It seems as if the misfortune, of which the shock had only struck us the evening before, had, during our repose, insinuated itself into our very flesh, which it tortured and wearied like a fever. The remembrance

came to him abruptly, and he sat up in his bed.

Then he began again, slowly, one by one, all the arguments that had agonized his heart on the jetty while the fog-horns were screaming. The more he thought, the less he doubted. He felt himself dragged by his logic as by a hand that with strangling grasp draws on to intolerable certitude.

He was thirsty, he was hot, his heart throbbed. He rose to open the window and breathe fresh air, and when he was up a slight noise reached him through the wall.

Jean was sleeping quietly, and softly breathing. He could sleep! He had no forebodings, he had divined nothing! A man who had known their mother had left him all his fortune. He accepted the money, as it seemed to him all right and natural.

He slept, rich and contented, without knowing that his brother was panting in suffering and distress; and there arose in Pierre a rage against this sleeper, so contented and careless.

Yesterday he would have knocked at his

door and entered, and, sitting beside the bed, would have said to him, startled with his sudden awakening :

“Jean, you ought not to keep this legacy, which to-morrow might bring on our mother suspicion and dishonor.”

To-day he could not speak ; he could not say to Jean that he did not believe him their father's son. At present he must guard in secret, keep buried in him, the shame he had discovered ; he must hide from all the stain he had detected, and which no one must discover, not even his brother—above all, not his brother.

Little did he think now of empty respect for public opinion. He would have liked all the world to accuse his mother, provided that he—he alone—he knew her to be innocent. How could he bear to live near her every day, and believe, as he saw her, that his brother was sprung from the caresses of a stranger ?

How calm and serene she was, nevertheless ! How sure of herself she seemed ! Was it possible for a woman like her, with

pure soul and upright heart, to fall, dragged down by passion, without exhibiting later any signs of remorse, or of the memories of her troubled conscience ?

Remorse, remorse ! It must once, in the early days, have tortured her ; then it was effaced as everything is effaced. Certainly she had wept for her fault, and by degrees had almost forgotten it. Have not all women, all, this prodigious faculty of forgetfulness, which makes them scarce recognize after a few years the man whose lips have kissed them again and again ? The kiss strikes like lightning, love passes like a tempest ; then life once more becomes calm as the sky, and begins again as before. Do we remember a passing cloud ?

Pierre could not remain in his room. This house, his father's house, crushed him. He felt the roof press on his head, and the walls stifle him. And, as he was very thirsty, he lighted his candle to go and drink a glass of fresh water at the kitchen filter.

He descended two flights ; then, as he ascended with the carafe full, he sat down, in his

night-shirt, on one of the steps of the stairs where a current of air was blowing, and drank, without a glass, by long gulps, like a runner out of breath. When once more he became motionless, the silence of the dwelling struck him ; then, one by one, he distinguished the slightest noises. At first it was the clock in the dining-room, and its ticking seemed to him to grow louder second by second. Then again he heard heavy breathing—the breathing of an old man, short, painful, and hard—his father's beyond question ; and he shrank together at the idea, as if it had only just leaped forth in him, that these two men, sleeping in the same house, father and son, were nothing to each other ! No tie, not even the frailest, united them, and they did not know it ! They talked affectionately to each other, they embraced each other, they were glad or sorry together over the same things, as if the same blood ran in their veins. Yet two persons born at the two extremities of the world could not be more alien to each other than this father and this son. They believed they loved each other, because a lie had grown up

between them. It was a lie that produced this paternal love and this filial love—a lie impossible to expose, and which no one should ever know except him, the true son.

Still, still, if he were mistaken? How know it? Yes, a likeness, even a slight one, might exist between his father and Jean, one of those mysterious likenesses that pass from great-grandfather to great-grandson, and show that the whole race descends directly from one source. It would be an easy thing for a medical man like him to recognize it—the form of the jaw, the curve of the nose, the distance between the eyes, the nature of the hair or teeth; even less than these, a gesture, a habit, a trick of manner, a transmitted taste, some sign or other quite characteristic for a trained eye.

He could recall nothing—no, nothing. But he had not looked carefully, he had not observed carefully, as he had had no reason for tracing out any imperceptible indications.

He rose to reënter his room, and began to mount the stairs with slow steps, and ponder-

ing all the time. As he passed before his brother's door he stopped short, his hand extended to open it. He was seized with an imperious desire to see Jean at once, to take a long look at him, to surprise him in his sleep, while the peaceful face and the relaxed lineaments were in repose, and when all the artificiality of life had disappeared. Thus he would seize the sleeping secret of his physiognomy, and if any appreciable resemblance existed, it should not escape him.

But if Jean woke, what should he say? How explain his visit?

He remained standing, his fingers grasping the door-handle, and seeking a reason or pretext.

He remembered all at once that, eight days before, he had lent his brother a phial of laudanum to allay a fit of toothache. He might have toothache himself this night, and come to get the bottle. Then he entered, but with a furtive step like a thief.

Jean, with his mouth half open, was sleeping a profound animal sleep. His beard and fair hair made a splash of gold in the white

linen. He did not awake, but his heavy breathing ceased.

Pierre bent over him and gazed on him with hungry eye. No ; this young man did not resemble Roland, and, for the second time, his mind returned to the miniature of Maréchal that had disappeared. He must find it. Seeing it, perhaps he would doubt no longer.

His brother stirred, disturbed doubtless by his presence, or by the light of the taper penetrating his eyelids. Then the doctor drew back, on tiptoe, toward the door, which he closed noiselessly. He returned to his room, but did not go to bed.

The day was slow in coming. The hours were struck, one after another, by the drawing-room clock, whose bell had a grave, deep tone, as if the little specimen of horology had swallowed the bell of a cathedral. The sounds rose up through the empty staircase, traversed walls and doors, and died away in the depths of the rooms, in the dead ear of the sleepers. Pierre walked to and fro from his bed to the window. What should he do ?





THE LIKENESS.



He was too much upset to pass the day at home. He wished still to be alone, at least till the next day, in order to reflect, calm himself, or fortify himself for the every-day life which he had to resume.

Well, he would go to Trouville, and watch the crowd swarming on the beach. It would divert him, change the current of his thoughts, and give him time to prepare himself for the horrible thing that he had found out.

At earliest dawn he made his toilet and dressed. The fog had lifted ; it was a fine, very fine day. As the Trouville boat did not sail till nine o'clock, the doctor thought that he ought to embrace his mother before leaving.

He waited for the hour when she rose every day, and then went down. His heart beat so fiercely as he touched the door that he paused to take breath. His hand, as it lay on the door-handle, was weak and quivering, almost incapable of the slight exertion of turning the knob to enter. He knocked. His mother's voice asked :

“ Who is there ? ”

“ Pierre.”

“ What do you want ? ”

“ To say good-morning, because I am going to pass the day at Trouville with some friends.”

“ But I am still in bed.”

“ Do not disturb yourself, then ; I shall embrace you when I return, this evening.”

He hoped that he could get away without seeing her, without pressing on her cheeks the kiss which made his heart rise beforehand.

But she replied :

“ A moment ; I'll open the door. You must wait till I am back in bed.”

He heard her bare feet on the floor, and then the sound of the bolt sliding. She cried :

“ Come in ! ”

He went in. She was sitting in her bed, while, on his side, Roland, with a silk handkerchief round his head, and his face to the wall, continued to sleep. Nothing but a shake of the arm could have awakened him. On the days he went fishing, the maid, who

had been rung up at the appointed hour by the sailor Papagris, used to come and drag her master from this invincible repose.

Pierre, as he approached, looked at his mother, and it seemed to him all at once that he had never seen her.

She held out her cheek ; he kissed it twice, and then seated himself on a low chair.

“ You decided on this party yesterday evening ? ” she said.

“ Yes, yesterday evening.”

“ You will be back for dinner ? ”

“ I do not know yet. In any case, do not wait for me.”

He examined her with stupefied curiosity. It was his mother, this woman here ! All this countenance, seen from childhood, since his eye could distinguish, this smile, this voice, so well known, so familiar, appeared to him, abruptly, quite new, quite other than what they had been hitherto for him. He understood at this instant that, loving her, he had never looked at her. Yet it was she, and he knew every smallest detail of her countenance ; but he perceived these little

details, sharply, for the first time. His anxious attention, as he scrutinized this beloved face, revealed it to him as something different, with a physiognomy which he had never discovered.

He rose to go, and then, suddenly yielding to the unconquerable desire of knowing what had been gnawing his heart since the evening before :

“ Oh, say ! I fancy I remember there used to be, once, in Paris, a miniature of Maréchal in our parlor.”

She hesitated a second or two, or at least he imagined that she hesitated ; then she said :

“ Oh, yes ! ”

“ What has become of this portrait ? ”

Her answer, again, might have come quicker :

“ That portrait—wait—I do not quite know—perhaps I have it in my secretary.”

“ You would be very kind to find it for me.”

“ Yes, I'll look. Why do you want it ? ”

“ Oh, not for myself ! I thought it would

be quite natural to give it to Jean, and it would please my brother."

"You are right. It is a happy thought. I will look for it as soon as I get up."

He left the room.

It was a cloudless day without a breath of air. The people in the streets seemed light-hearted; merchants were going to their business, clerks to their office, girls to their shops. Some of them were singing, gladdened by the clearness of the day.

The passengers were already going on board the Trouville boat. Pierre took his seat, quite at the stern, on a wooden bench.

He asked himself :

"Was she disquieted by my question about the portrait, or only surprised? Has she mislaid it or hidden it? Does she know or does she really not know where it is? If she has hidden it, why?"

Advancing steadily from deduction to deduction, he reached this conclusion :

The portrait, the portrait of a friend, the portrait of a lover, had remained in the parlor in full view till the day when the wife or

the mother had been the first to perceive, before any one else, that it resembled her son. Doubtless, for a long time she had been looking out to detect the resemblance ; and when she had detected it, had seen it become more apparent, and had recognized that any one, some day or other, might detect it also, then, some evening, she had removed the alarming miniature, and as she did not dare to destroy it, had concealed it.

Pierre now remembered very well that the miniature had disappeared long ago, long before their departure from Paris. It had disappeared, he believed, when the growth of Jean's beard made him all at once the image of the fair-haired young man who smiled in the frame.

The movement of the boat as she put off troubled the course of his thoughts and dispersed them. He rose and looked at the sea.

The little packet-boat passed the jetties, turned to the left, and puffing, panting, and quivering, took her course to the distant coast, which was visible through the morning



mist. Here and there the red sail of some heavy fishing-boat, lying motionless on the smooth sea, had the air of a huge rock rising from the water. The Seine, as it came down



from Rouen, seemed a large arm of the sea, that separated two neighboring countries.

In less than an hour Trouville was reached, and, as it was the time for bathing, Pierre betook himself to the beach.

From a distance it had the look of a long

garden full of open flowers. On the great bank of yellow sand, stretching from the jetty to the Roches Noires, parasols of every color, hats of every shape, dresses of every shade, in groups before the bathing-houses, in lines along the sea, or scattered here and there, resembled, in truth, enormous bouquets in an immeasurable meadow. The confused sounds, near or far, of voices sharpened by the thin air, the calls, the cries of children being bathed, the clear laughter of women, all formed a sweet, unbroken clamor, which was blended with the imperceptible sea air, and was inhaled with it.

Pierre walked in the middle of these people, more lost, more separated from them, more isolated, more immersed in torturing thought, than if he had been flung from a ship's deck into the sea, a hundred leagues from shore. He brushed against them; he heard, without listening, a few phrases; and he saw, without looking, the men talk to the women and the women smile on the men.

Then, at once, as if starting from sleep,

he perceived them distinctly; and a hatred against them seized him, for they seemed happy and content.

He went on, brushing against the groups and circling round them, a prey to new thoughts. All these many-colored toilets that covered the sands like a bed of flowers, these pretty stuffs, these showy sunshades, the factitious gracefulness of imprisoned waists, all the ingenious inventions of fashion, from the tiny shoe to the extravagant hat, the seduction of gesture, voice, and smile—the whole coquetry displayed on the beach suddenly seemed to him an immense flowering of feminine perversity. All these dressed-up women wanted to please, to seduce, to tempt, some one. They had made themselves beautiful for men, for all men, except the husband whom they had no longer need to conquer. They had made themselves beautiful for the lover of to-day and the lover of to-morrow; for the stranger they met, noticed, perhaps expected.

And these men seated by them, eye gazing into eye, lips speaking to neighboring lips,

summoned them, desired them, hunted them like game, like game agile and flying, although it seemed so near and so easy. The vast beach was, then, only a love-market, where some sold themselves, and others gave themselves ; where these bargained for their caresses, and those only held out promises. All these women had only one thought—to offer and make men desire their bodies, which were already sold, already promised, to other men. And he thought it was always the same thing the whole world over.

His mother had done like the rest ; that was all ! Like the rest ?—no ! There were exceptions—many, many exceptions. The women he saw around him, rich, silly, seekers for love, were, on the whole, coquettes of the elegant world of fashion, or even coquettes with a market price ; for respectable women, kept close at home, were never met at the beach trod by this legion of idlers.

The tide rose and gradually drove townwards the first line of bathers. Groups were seen to rise with a start, and fly, taking their chairs with them, before the yellow flood which



AT TROUVILLE, ON THE BEACH



was coming in, fringed with a light lacework of foam. The bathing-boxes on wheels were dragged up by the horse attached to each, and on the board walk, which ran along the beach from one end to the other, there was now an unbroken, dense, slow stream of elegant crowds, which formed two contrary currents, that jostled and blended. Pierre, in a state of nervous exasperation by the throng, fled and plunged into the town, where he stopped to breakfast at a common wine-shop at the beginning of the fields.

When he had taken his coffee, he stretched himself out on two chairs before the door, and, as he had scarcely slept the night before, dozed in the shadow of a lime-tree.

After some hours of repose he roused himself, and, seeing that it was time to return to catch the boat, he set out, though oppressed by a sudden weakness that had fallen on him during his slumber. He was determined to return, and learn if his mother had found the portrait of Maréchal. Would she be the first to speak of it, or would he have to ask her again? Beyond question, if she waited till

he interrogated her once more, she had a secret reason for not showing the portrait.

But when he had entered his room he hesitated to go down to dinner. He would suffer too much. His throbbing heart had not yet time to regain its quiet. Still he made up his mind, and appeared in the dining-room as they were sitting down to table.

An air of joy animated their faces.

"Well," said Roland, "how does it go on, that shopping of yours? I do not want to see anything before it's all in place."

His wife replied :

"Going on very well. Only it requires long reflection to avoid making a mismatch. The furniture gives us much to think of."

She had passed the day in visiting with Jean the carpet stores and furniture stores. She wanted rich materials, rather gaudy, to strike the eye. Her son, on the other hand, wanted something simple, with an air of distinction. So, over every sample shown them, they both of them repeated their arguments.



She maintained that the client required to be impressed, that he ought to experience, when he entered the waiting-room, the feeling of wealth.

Jean, on the contrary, wishing to attract only an opulent and fashionable clientèle, desired to conquer the refined classes by his modest and impeccable taste.

The discussion, which had lasted all day, began again with the soup.

Roland had no opinion. He repeated :

“I do not want to hear about anything. I'll go and see it when it is finished.”

Madame Roland appealed to the judgment of her elder son.

“Come, Pierre, what do you think?”

His nerves were so excited that he longed to reply with an oath. He said, however, in a dry tone, vibrating with indignation :

“Oh, I quite agree with Jean, for my part ! I like simplicity, which is, as regards taste, comparable to uprightness as regards character.”

His mother resumed :

“Remember, we live in a town of business

people, where good taste is not met everywhere."

Pierre replied :

"What matter? Is that a reason to imitate fools? If my townsfolk are stupid or dishonest, am I bound to follow their example? A woman will not go astray because her neighbors have lovers."

Jean burst into laughter.

"You have arguments by comparison that seem taken from the maxims of a moralist."

Pierre made no rejoinder, and his mother and brother recommenced their talk of stuffs and arm-chairs.

He looked at them as he had looked at his mother, in the morning, before he left for Trouville. He looked at them like an observant stranger; and, in fact, he fancied that he had come, all at once, into an unknown family.

His father, most of all, astonished him as he saw and thought about him. This fat, flabby man, this contented simpleton, was his father—his! No, no, Jean was not a bit like him.

His family ! Two days ago an unknown, maleficent hand, the hand of a dead man, had rent and broken, one by one, all the bonds that held together these four souls. It was all over, shattered forever. No mother now for him ; for he could not love her when he could not venerate her with that absolute, tender, and pious respect which the filial heart requires. No brother now for him, for this brother was the child of a stranger. There remained for him only a father—this fat man, whom he could not love in spite of himself.

He broke silence abruptly :

“O mamma, have you found the portrait ?”

She opened her eyes in surprise.

“What portrait ?”

“Maréchal’s.”

“No—that is, yes ; I have not found it, but I think I know where it is.”

“What are you talking about ?” Roland inquired.

Pierre answered :

“A miniature of Maréchal, that used to

be in our little parlor in Paris. I thought that Jean might like to have it."

Roland exclaimed :

"Yes, certainly, I remember it perfectly. I saw it again at the end of last week. Your mother pulled it out of her secretary when she was arranging her papers. It was Thursday or Friday.—You remember, Louise, don't you? I was just going to shave when you took it from a drawer and placed it on a chair beside you, with a heap of letters of which you burned half. Is not it odd that you should have handled that portrait scarcely two or three days before Jean's legacy came? If I believed in presentiments, I should call it one."

Madame Roland tranquilly replied :

"Yes, I know where it is. I will go and bring it at once."

Then she had been lying! She had lied that very morning, when she replied to her son's question as to what had become of the miniature: "I do not know exactly—perhaps I have it in my secretary."

She had seen it, touched it, handled it,

looked at it, a few days before, and then she had rehidden it in the secret drawer with some letters—his letters.

Pierre looked at his mother who had lied to him. He looked at her with the exasperated wrath of a son whose sacred affection had been betrayed and filched, and with the jealousy of a man who after long blindness at length detects a shameful treason. If he had been that woman's husband, he, her son, would have seized her by the wrists, by the shoulders, or by the hair, and have hurled her to the ground, and have smitten and torn and crushed her! Yet he could say nothing, do nothing, state nothing, reveal nothing. He was her son, he had nothing to avenge, he had not been betrayed.

But yes, she had betrayed him in his affection, in his filial respect. She owed to him to be irreproachable, as all owe to their children. If the wrath which made his blood boil amounted almost to hatred, it was because he felt her to be more criminal toward him than toward his father himself.

The love of man and wife is a voluntary

pact, where the one who fails is guilty only of perfidy ; but when a wife has become a mother her duty has increased, since Nature has confided to her a race. If she succumbs then, she is cowardly, worthless, infamous !

“Well, well,” said Roland suddenly, extending his legs under the table, as he did every evening, to sip his glass of cassis. “It is not hard to live on doing nothing when one has a little competence. I hope Jean will give us some dinners extra, now. It will go hard with him if I get sometimes a pain in my stomach.”

Then, turning to his wife :

“Go bring the portrait, pussy, as you have done eating. I should like to see it again.”

She rose, took a candle, and went. After an absence which seemed long to Pierre, although it only lasted three minutes, Madame Roland returned, smiling, and holding by its ring a gilt, old-fashioned frame.

“Here it is,” she said. “I found it almost at once.”

The doctor was the first to extend his hand. He took the portrait and examined it

at a little distance, at arm's-length. Then, feeling that his mother was looking at him, he slowly raised his eyes to his brother, to compare him with it. He almost said in the impulse of his violence : "See, this is like Jean." If he did not dare to utter these terrible words, he displayed his thoughts by the way in which he compared the living face and the painted face.

They had, certainly, some common traits—the same beard and the same brow, but nothing so precise as to permit the declaration, "Here is the father, and here the son." It was rather a family resemblance of kindred countenances animated by the same blood. But what was more decisive in Pierre's mind than this look in the two faces, was the fact that his mother rose, turned her back, and pretended to lock up in a cupboard, with excessive slowness, the sugar and the cassia.

She saw that he knew or at least suspected.

"Hand it to me," said Roland. Pierre handed over the miniature, and his father drew the candle nearer to see it better. Then in a softened tone he said :

"Poor fellow ! To think that he was like that when we knew him. How time flies ! He was a handsome man, all the same, at that period, and pleasant in his manners. Wasn't he, Louise ? "

As his wife did not reply, he continued :

"And what an even temper ! I never saw him in a bad humor. Well, it's over ; there's nothing remaining—except what he left to Jean. We can swear that our friend here was good and loyal to the end. Even when dying he did not forget us."

Jean, in his turn, extended his arm to take the portrait. He looked at it for some moments, and then, in a tone of regret :

"I do not recognize him at all. I can only remember him with white hair."

He returned the miniature to his mother. She cast on it a rapid glance, which was soon withdrawn and seemed timid ; then, in her natural voice :

"It belongs to you now, Jean, since you are his heir. We must carry it to your new rooms."

As they entered the parlor, she placed the



miniature on the mantelpiece, near the clock, where it used to stand.

Roland filled his pipe, Pierre and Jean lighted cigarettes. Usually one brother used to smoke walking up and down the room; the other, buried in an easy-chair, with his legs crossed. The father always straddled a chair and spat into the fireplace.

Madame Roland, on a low seat, near a little table that supported the lamp, was accustomed to embroider, knit, or mark the linen.

This evening she commenced a piece of needlework for Jean's bedroom. It was a difficult and complicated piece of work, and the beginning required all her attention. Nevertheless, from time to time her eye, while counting the stitches, was raised and directed, quickly and furtively, to the little portrait of the dead man which leaned against the clock. The doctor, who crossed the narrow room in four or five strides, his hands behind his back, and his cigarette between his lips, encountered his mother's look every time.

One might say that they were playing the spy on each other, and that war would be declared between them; and a painful disquiet, an insupportable disquiet, wrung Pierre's heart. Tortured and satisfied at the same time, he said to himself: "She ought to suffer at this moment, if she knows that I have divined her." And at each return toward the fireplace, he stopped for a few seconds to look at the blond countenance of Maréchal, just to show that a fixed idea haunted him. And the little portrait, smaller than an open hand, seemed a living, malevolent, terrible personage that had suddenly entered this house and this family.

Suddenly the door-bell rang. Madame Roland, always so calm, was startled, and the start revealed to the doctor the trouble of her nerves.

She said, however, "It must be Madame Rosémilly," and her anxious glance was again raised to the mantelpiece.

Pierre understood, or thought he understood, her terror and her anguish. Women's eyes are sharp, their wits nimble, their minds

suspicious. When the incoming visitor should perceive this unknown miniature, she might, perhaps, at the first glance, discover the resemblance between that face and Jean's face. Then she would know and understand it all ! He was seized with dread, a sudden, horrible dread, that the shame would be unveiled ; and, turning back as the door opened, he took the portrait and slid it under the clock without his father or brother seeing the action.

As he again encountered his mother's eyes, they seemed to him changed, troubled, and haggard.

" Good-day," said Madame Rosémilly ; " I have come to take a cup of tea with you."

While they gathered about her to ask how she was, Pierre disappeared by the door that had been left open.

They were surprised when they discovered his departure. Jean, who was discontented at it on account of the young woman, who, he feared, would deem it rude, muttered :

" What a bear !"

Madame Roland replied :

"You must not be angry with him—he is not very well to-day, and, moreover, is tired with his journey to Trouville."

"No matter," rejoined Roland. "That's no reason for going off like a savage."

Madame Rosémilly tried to smooth things down by saying :

"No, no. He took leave *à l'anglaise*. In society that is always the way when one leaves early."

"Well," replied Jean, "that may be so in society ; but one does not treat one's family *à l'anglaise*, and that is what my brother has been doing some time past."



VI.

JEAN AND MADAME ROSÉMILLY



## VI.

NOTHING happened in the Roland household for a week or two. The father went fishing ; Jean, with his mother's assistance, was settling himself in his new rooms ; Pierre showed his gloomy countenance only at meal-times.

His father asked him one evening :

"Why the devil do you look as if you were at a funeral ? I have noticed it before to-day."

And the doctor replied :

"Because I feel the terrible burden of life."

The old fellow understood nothing of his meaning, and with an air of disappointment continued:

"By George, it is too bad! Ever since we have had the luck of receiving that legacy, everybody seems miserable; just as if some accident had happened us, or we were in mourning for some one."

"In fact, I am in mourning for some one," said Pierre.

"You! for whom?"

"Some one you did not know, and whom I loved too well."

Roland imagined he was talking of some love-affair, and asked:

"A woman, of course?"

"Yes, a woman."

"Dead?"

"No, worse. Lost!"

"Ah!"

Although he was astonished at this unexpected confidence, made to him in his wife's presence, and at his son's strange tone, he did not pursue the subject, for he thought that such matters did not concern third parties.



Madame Roland seemed not to have heard ; she was very pale, and therefore looked sick.

Her husband, surprised at seeing her sit down as if she fell into her chair, and at hearing her breathe as if respiration was difficult, had already repeatedly observed to her :

“ You do look very sick, Louise. You fatigue yourself too much in arranging things for Jean. Rest a bit, confound it all ! He is not in a hurry, the young swell, for he is rich.”

She shook her head without reply.

Her paleness, on this day, was so great that Roland again remarked it.

“ Come,” he said, “ this won’t do at all, my poor old girl ; we must look after you.”

Then, turning to his son :

“ You see, don’t you, that she is ill ? You have examined her, I suppose ? ”

Pierre replied :

“ No ; I did not notice that she ailed anything.”

Roland lost his temper.

“ Why, it stares you in the face, doggone it ! What’s the use of being a doctor, if you

cannot even see that your mother is indisposed ! Now, look at her ! Just look at her ! No, indeed ; one might be dying, and this doctor here would not notice it."

Madame Roland breathed heavily, and grew so wan that her husband exclaimed :

"She's going to be ill !"

"No—no—it is nothing ! It will pass off—it is nothing."

Pierre approached her, and, looking at her fixedly, said :

"Let us see. What is the matter?"

"Nothing—nothing, I assure you—nothing," she repeated in a low, hurried voice.

Roland had gone for some aromatic vinegar ; he returned, and presenting the bottle to his son :

"Here—quiet her nerves. You have felt her pulse, at any rate?"

As Pierre bent forward to take her wrist, she drew back her hand with such an abrupt movement that she struck a chair near her.

"Come," he said in a cold tone, "let me attend to you, as you are ill."

She rose and extended her arm. The skin

was burning, the pulse was irregular and jerky. He muttered :

“In fact, it is pretty serious. You must take some soothing medicine. I’ll go and write a prescription.”

While he was bending over the paper and writing, a slight sound of suppressed sighs, of choking, of short, interrupted breathing, made him suddenly turn round.

She was weeping, with her hands over her face.

Roland, in alarm, asked :

“Louise, Louise, what is the matter? what is the matter?”

She made no response, and seemed torn by some horrible and profound sorrow.

Her husband tried to take hold of her hands and pull them from her face. She resisted, repeating :

“No, no, no.”

Then he turned to his son :

“Why, what is the matter with her? I never saw her like this.”

“It is nothing,” said Pierre; “a slight nervous attack.”

It seemed to him as if his heart was comforted at the sight of her anguish, and that this grief lightened his resentment and diminished her debt of opprobrium. He looked at her like a judge satisfied with his work.

But all at once she rose and rushed to the door, so suddenly and abruptly that it could neither be foreseen nor prevented, and ran to shut herself up in her room.

Father and son were left face to face.

"Do you understand anything of the case?" said the former.

"Yes," replied the latter. "It comes from a simple little nervous disturbance which often declares itself at mamma's age. It is likely that she will have many more attacks like this one."

Indeed she had others, nearly every day; attacks which Pierre seemed to provoke by a single word, as if he held the secret of her strange and unknown trouble. He looked out for intermissions of repose in her face, and, with all the art of a torturer, awoke by a single word the grief which for a moment had been calmed.

And he suffered as much as she. He suffered frightfully from no longer loving her, from no longer respecting her, and from torturing her. When he had set bleeding the wound that he had opened in this heart of wife and mother, when he felt how wretched and how desperate she was, he would wander all alone through the town, so pierced with remorse, so racked with pity, so woe-begone at seeing her thus crushed by his filial contempt, that he longed to fling himself into the sea and drown himself to make an end of it all.

Oh, how he wished to pardon her now ! but he could not, for he was unable to forget. If he had only been able not to cause her suffering ! but he could not do that either, for he was always suffering himself. He returned home at meal-times, full of gentler resolutions. Then when he caught sight of her, when he saw her eyes—once so frank and direct, now timid, distracted, shrinking—he smote in spite of himself, for he could not keep back the treacherous phrase which rose to his lips.

The shameful secret, known to them alone,

spurred him on against her. It was poison that he had at present in his veins, and that made him long to bite like a mad dog.

There was nothing now to prevent his torturing her unceasingly ; for Jean was almost altogether in his new rooms, and returned to the house only to dine and sleep every evening with his family.

He often witnessed the bitter words and violent manner of his brother, but attributed them to jealousy. He promised himself to put him in his proper place and give him a lesson some day or other, for the family life was becoming quite painful through these continual scenes. But, as he lived out of the house at this time, he suffered less from Pierre's offensive rudeness, and his love of peace urged him to patience. Besides, fortune had intoxicated him, and his thoughts chiefly rested on things which had a direct interest for him. He came in full of new little cares, occupied with the cut of a jacket, the shape of a felt hat, the proper size for visiting-cards. And he talked persistently about all the details of his apartment—of shelves placed in



EXCURSION TO SAINT JOUIN.





the bedroom cupboard to hold his linen, of portmanteaus piled in the vestibule, and of electric burglar-alarms.

It had been decided that at the house-warming of his new suite of rooms there should be an excursion to Saint Jouin, and that the party should, after dinner, return and take tea with him. Roland wished to go by sea ; but the distance and the uncertainty as to the time when they would arrive by this route, if the wind was contrary, led them to reject his proposal, and a break was hired for the occasion.

The departure took place about ten o'clock, so as to arrive for breakfast. The dusty high-road traversed the country district of Normandy, to which the undulating plains and the tree-girt farms lent the appearance of a park without limits. As the carriage rolled on at the slow trot of two heavy horses, the Roland family, Madame Rosémilly, and Captain Beausire, deafened by the clatter of the wheels, remained silent, and closed their eyes in the clouds of dust.

The harvest was ripe. Beside the dull

green of the clover, and the bright green of the beets, the yellow stalks of wheat illuminated the plains with a tawny golden gleam. They seemed to have imbibed the sunlight that fell upon them. Here and there the reapers were at work ; and in the fields attacked by the scythe the laborers were seen, swinging rhythmically as they swept the huge, wing-shaped blade over the surface of the ground.

After a drive of two hours, the break turned to the left, passed near a windmill in motion—a gray melancholy wreck, half rotten and condemned, the last survivor of the old mills—and then entered a pretty courtyard, and drew up before a gay little house, a celebrated inn of the district.

The landlady, who was named *la belle* Alphonsine, came smiling to the door, and extended her hand to the two ladies, who were hesitating at the carriage-steps, which were awkwardly high.

On the margin of the lawn, beneath the shade of some apple-trees, a party of strangers were already breakfasting in a tent ; they

were Parisians from Étretat, and the sound of voices, of laughter, and of clinking plates could be heard in the house.

All the large halls being occupied, they had



to dine in a private room. M. Roland at once saw hanging on the wall some shrimp-nets.

“Ah, ha !” he cried, “do they fish for prawns here ?”

“Yes,” replied Beausire ; “this is the very

spot where they take more than on any other part of the coast."

"Shall we go there after breakfast?"

It was ascertained that it was low water at three o'clock, and it was resolved that all the party should pass the afternoon on the rocks looking for shrimps.

They ate sparingly, to avoid the flow of blood to the head when they had their feet in the water. They wished, too, to reserve their appetites for dinner, which was ordered on a grand scale, to be ready at six when they returned.

Roland could not control his impatience. He wanted to buy the special apparatus employed in this style of fishing, and which resembles very much that used to catch butterflies in the fields.

It consists of little pockets of network, attached to a wooden ring at the end of a long pole. Alphonsine, smiling all the time, lent them the nets; then she assisted the ladies in making an improvised toilet to avoid wetting their dresses; she lent them some petticoats, thick worsted stockings, and bathing

slippers. The men took off their boots, and bought at the cobblers' some wooden shoes and clogs in their place.

They started out, net on shoulder, and basket on back. Madame Rosémilly was charming in this costume, with an unexpected, rustic, fearless style of beauty.

The petticoat borrowed from Alphonsine, coquettishly raised and held by a few stitches, so as to enable the wearer to run and leap, without fear, among the rocks, displayed her ankle and the lower part of the calf—the firm calf of a woman at once agile and strong. Her figure was loose, to leave all her movements easy ; and she had found, to cover her head, an immense gardener's hat of yellow straw, with enormous flaps, to which a sprig of tamarisk, holding one side cocked up, gave the dauntless air of a dashing mousquetaire.

Jean, since receiving his legacy, had asked himself every day whether he should marry her or no. Every time he saw her, he felt decided to make her his wife ; but when he was alone he thought that, meanwhile, there

was time to reflect. She was now not as rich as he was, for she possessed only twelve thousand francs a year, but in real estate farms, and lots in Havre on the docks, and this might, in time, be worth a large sum. Their fortunes, then, were almost equivalent ; and the young widow, assuredly, pleased him much.

As he saw her walking before him on this day, he thought, " Well, I must decide. Beyond question, I could not do better."

They followed the slope of a little valley, descending from the village to the cliff, and the cliff at the end of this valley looked down on the sea from a height of nearly three hundred feet. Framed in by the green coast, sinking away to the left and right, a spacious triangle of water, silvery blue in the sunlight, was visible, and a sail, scarcely perceptible, looked like an insect down below. The sky, filled with radiance, was so blended with the water that the eye could not distinguish where one ended and the other began ; and the two ladies, who were in front of the three men, cast on this clear horizon the clear outline of their compact figures.

Jean, with ardent glance, saw speeding before him the well-turned ankle, the delicate leg, the supple waist, and the enticing hat of Madame Rosémilly. Every movement stimulated his desire, and urged him to those decisive resolutions which the timid and the hesitating take abruptly. The warm air, in which was blended the scent of the coast, of the reeds, the clover, the grasses, and the marine odor of the rocks exposed by the tide, animated him with a gentle intoxication ; and he decided, more and more at every step, at every second, at every look he cast on the graceful outline of the young woman ; he decided to hesitate no longer, to tell her that he loved her, and wanted to marry her. The fishing party would be of service : it would render a *tête-à-tête* more easy, and, besides, it would furnish a pretty background, a pretty scene for words of love, with their feet in a basin of limpid water, as they watched the long feelers of the shrimps darting through the seaweeds.

When they reached the end of the valley at the edge of the bluff, they perceived a

little path that ran down the cliff ; and below them, between the sea and the foot of the precipice, about half way down, a wondrous chaos of enormous rocks, that had fallen or been hurled down, heaped on each other on a kind of grassy, broken plain, that disappeared toward the south, and which had been formed by ancient landslips. In the long strip of brushwood and turf, tossed, one might say, by the throes of a volcano, the fallen rocks resembled the ruins of a great vanished city, that, once on a time, had looked down on the ocean, itself dominated by the white and endless wall of the cliff.

“How beautiful !” said Madame Rosémilly, pausing.

Jean joined her, and with beating heart offered his hand to guide her down the narrow steps cut in the rock.

They went on in front, while Beausire, stiffening himself on his short legs, held out his bent arm to Madame Roland, who was dazed by the blank depth.

Roland and Pierre came last ; and the doctor had to support his father, who was so



troubled by vertigo that he sat down, and thus slid from step to step.

The young people, who descended at the head of the party, went rapidly, and suddenly caught sight of a streamlet of pure water springing from a little hole in the cliff, by the side of a wooden bench which formed a resting place about the middle of the slope. The streamlet at first spread into a basin about the size of a wash-hand bowl, which it had excavated for itself, and then, falling in a cascade of about two feet in height, flowed across the path where a carpet of cress had grown, and then disappeared in the reeds and grass, across the level where the landslips were heaped up.

“How thirsty I am!” cried Madame Rosémilly.

But how to drink? She tried to collect in the hollow of her hand the water which escaped between her fingers. Jean had a bright idea; he placed a stone in the road, and she knelt on it to drink from the very source with her lips, which thus were raised to the same height.

When she raised her head, covered with glittering drops sprinkled by thousands over her face, her hair, her eyelashes, her bust, Jean, bending toward her, whispered :

“How pretty you are !”

She replied in the tone one assumes to scold a child :

“Will you hold your tongue ?”

These were the first words of flirtation which they exchanged.

“Come,” said Jean, rather discomfited, “let us be off before they overtake us.”

In fact, he was aware that Captain Beausire was quite close to them, who was descending backwards in order to support Madame Roland with both hands, while, higher up and farther away, M. Roland, in a sitting posture, was dragging himself down by his feet and elbows with the speed of a tortoise, and Pierre went before him to superintend his movements.

The path became less steep, and formed now a sloping road that skirted the enormous blocks that had fallen from above. Madame Rosémilly and Jean began to run, and were

soon on the shingle. They crossed it to gain the rocks, which extended in a long and flat surface covered with seaweed, in which innumerable flashes of water glittered. The tide was low and far out, behind this slimy plain of sea-wreck with its shining green and black growths.

Jean rolled up his trousers to his knee, and his sleeves to the elbow, so as to wet himself with impunity, and cried "Forward," as he boldly leaped into the first pool that presented itself.

With more prudence, though with equal determination to wade into the water at once, the young woman went around the narrow basin with timid steps, for she slipped on the slimy weeds.

"Do you see anything?" she said.

"Yes, I see your face reflected in the water."

"If you see only that, you will not have any fishing to boast of."

He said in a tender voice :

"Ah, that is the fishing I shall prefer over all !"

She laughed.

“Try, then, and you’ll see how it slips through your net.”

“Well, if you would like—”

“I would like to see you catch some prawns—and nothing more—just at present.”

“You are cruel. Let us go farther ; there is nothing here.”

He offered her his hand to steady her on the greasy rocks. She leaned on it rather timidly ; and he, all at once, felt himself invaded by love, throbbing with desire, hungering for her, as if the passion that was germinating in him had waited for that day to burst forth.

They soon arrived at a deeper crevice, where, beneath the rippling water flowing to the distant sea by an invisible fissure, long, fine, strangely colored seaweeds, with tresses of rose and green, floated as if they were swimming.

Madame Rosémilly exclaimed :

“Look, look, I see one—a big one, a very big one, down there !”

He perceived it, in turn, and went down

into the crevice, although the water wet him to the waist.

But the creature, moving its long feelers, quietly retired before the net. Jean drove it toward the wreck, sure of catching it there. When it found itself blockaded, it made a sudden dash over the net, crossed the pool, and disappeared.

The young woman, who was watching in panting eagerness his attempt, could not refrain from crying :

“ Ah, clumsy ! ”

He was vexed, and, without thinking, dragged his net through a pool full of weeds. As he raised it to the surface, he saw in it three large transparent prawns, which had been blindly dragged from their invisible hiding place.

He presented them in triumph to Madame Rosémilly, who dared not touch them for fear of the sharp, toothlike point which arms their heads.

At last she decided to take them ; and seizing between two of her fingers the thin end of their beard, she placed them, one after the

other, in her basket, with some weed to keep them alive. Then, on finding a shallower piece of water, she entered it with hesitating steps, and catching her breath as the cold struck her feet, began to fish herself. She was skilful and cunning, with a supple wrist and a sportsman's instinct. Almost at every cast she brought out some victims, deceived and surprised by the ingenious slowness with which she swept the pool.

Jean was taking nothing ; but he followed her step by step, touched her dress, bent over her, pretended to be in despair at his awkwardness, and wished her to teach him.

"Show me how," he said, "show me !"

Then as their two faces were reflected, one beside the other, in the clear water, which the deep-growing seaweeds formed into a limpid mirror, Jean smiled at the face so near his which looked up to him from below, and at times threw to it, from the tips of his fingers, a kiss which seemed to fall on it.

"You are very tiresome," the young woman said. "My dear fellow, never do two things at the same time."



LOOKING FOR PRAWNS.





He replied :

“ I am only doing one. I love you.”

She drew herself up erect, and in a serious tone :

“ Come, now. What is the matter with you for the last ten minutes? Have you lost your head ? ”

“ No, I have not lost my head. I love you, and at last dare to tell you so.”

They were now standing in the pool of sea-water that rose nearly to their knees, and, with their dripping hands leaning on their nets, looked into the depth of each other's eyes.

She resumed in playful and rather annoyed tone :

“ You are badly advised to speak to me thus at this moment. Could you not wait another day, and not spoil my fishing ? ”

He replied :

“ Pardon me, but I could not keep silence. I have loved you a long time. To-day you have made me lose my senses.”

Then she seemed at once to take her reso-

lution, and to resign herself to talk business and renounce amusement.

“Let us sit on this rock,” she said : “we shall be able to talk quietly.”

They climbed on a rock a little higher ; and when they were settled, side by side, their feet hanging down in the full sunshine, she rejoined :

“My friend, you are not a child, and I am not a girl. Both of us know what we are about, and can weigh all the consequences of our acts. If you decide to-day to declare your love to me, I suppose naturally you wish to marry me.”

He had scarcely expected such a clear statement of the situation, and answered sheepishly :

“Why, yes !”

“Have you spoken to your father and mother ?”

“No. I wished to know if you would accept me.”

She extended to him her hand, which was still wet, and as he placed his own in it with fervor :

"I am willing," she said. "I believe you good and loyal. But do not forget that I would not displease your parents."

"Do you think that my mother has foreseen nothing, and that she would love you as she does if she did not desire a marriage between us?"

"True ; I am rather confused."

They were silent. On his part, he was astonished that she was so little confused and so reasonable. He expected some pretty airs and graces, refusals which say yes, a whole coquettish comedy of love blended with fishing and the splashing of water. And it was all over ; he felt himself bound and married in a score of words. They had nothing more to say to each other, since they were in full accord ; and they both now remained somewhat embarrassed at what had passed so rapidly between them, perhaps even somewhat confused, not daring to speak further, not daring to fish further, not knowing what to do.

The voice of M. Roland came to the rescue.

"This way, this way, young people ! Come and see Beausire. He is emptying the sea, the old fellow."

The captain, indeed, had marvellous success. Wet up to the loins, he went from pool to pool, detecting at a glance the best spots, and with a slow, sure movement of his net searching every cavity beneath the seaweeds.

And the pretty, transparent prawns, of a light gray color, danced on the hollow of his hand when he took them with a quick gesture, to fling them into his basket.

Madame Rosémilly, surprised and delighted, kept close to him, and imitated him as well as she could, forgetting almost her promise and Jean, who was dreamily following her, to abandon herself to the childish pleasures of collecting the little creatures beneath the floating grasses.

Roland suddenly broke the silence by exclaiming :

"Here is Madame Roland coming to join us."

At first she had remained with Pierre on

the beach, for neither of them had any desire to amuse themselves by running over the rocks and splashing themselves in the pools, and yet they hesitated about remaining together. She was afraid of him, and her son was afraid of her and of himself—afraid of his cruelty which he could not master.

They sat down then, near each other, on the shingle.

Both, in the warm sunshine which the sea air tempered, in presence of the limitless and sweet horizon of blue water with silver reflections—both thought at the same time, “How pleasant it would have been for us here, once on a time.”

She dared not speak to Pierre, for she knew that his answer would be harsh; he dared not speak to his mother, for he knew, too, that in spite of himself he would speak rudely.

He poked among the round pebbles with his cane, pushing and striking them. She, with wandering eyes, had taken in her fingers three or four little stones, which she passed from one hand to another by a slow, mechani-

cal movement. Her straying glances, as they moved at random before her, saw, in the middle of the field of seaweed, her son Jean fishing with Madame Rosémilly. She followed them, watching their movements, and clearly comprehending with her maternal instinct that they were not talking as in other days. She saw them bending side by side when they looked at each other in the water, standing erect, face to face, when they questioned their hearts, and then climbing to a seat on the rock to converse with each other.

Their outlines stood out clearly defined, and seemed the only figures in the horizon, and in this wide expanse of sky, sea, and cliff they assumed the aspect of something grand and symbolic.

Pierre also looked at them, and a hard laugh suddenly came from his lips.

Without turning to him, Madame Roland said :

“What is the matter ?”

Still with his sardonic smile, he replied :

“I’m taking a lesson. I am learning how men prepare to be cuckolds.”

She gave a start of anger and revolt, shocked at the word, exasperated at what she fancied she understood.

“For whom do you mean that?”

“For Jean, by Jove! It is comical to see them going on.”

She replied in a low voice, trembling with emotion :

“O Pierre, how cruel you are! That woman is uprightness itself. Your brother could not choose better.”

He laughed aloud, a forced, jesting laugh.

“Ha, ha, ha! Uprightness itself! All women are uprightness itself, and all husbands cuckolds. Ha, ha, ha!”

She rose without replying and rapidly descended the slope of the shingle; and at the risk of slipping, falling into the holes concealed by the weeds, or of breaking leg or arm, she went almost at a run across the shallows, without looking, straight before her, to her other son.

Jean, seeing her approach, cried to her :

“Well, mamma, have you made up your mind?”

Without replying, she seized his arm, as to say, "Save me ! Protect me !"

He saw her trouble, and in great surprise :

"How pale you are ! What is the matter ?"

"I nearly fell. I am timid on these rocks."

Jean guided her, supported her, explained the sport, and tried to interest her. But as she scarcely listened, and as he felt a violent need of confiding in some one, he drew her aside, and in a low voice :

"Guess what I have done."

"Why—why—I cannot !"

"Guess."

"I—I cannot."

"Well, then, I have told Madame Rosémilly that I wanted to marry her."

She made no reply ; her head was in a whirl, her soul distressed so that she could hardly understand.

She repeated :

"Marry her ?"

"Yes. Have I done right ? She is charming, is she not ?"



"Yes, charming. You have done right."

"Then you approve?"

"Yes, I approve."

"How oddly you say that! One might fancy that—that you were not pleased."



"Oh, yes. I am—pleased."

"Sure?"

"Quite sure."

To prove it, she took him in her arms and kissed him with a mother's fondest kisses.

Then, when she had wiped her eyes which had filled with tears, she perceived down on the beach a figure, prone like a corpse, with

its face in the shingle. It was the other brother, Pierre, who was brooding in despair.

She led her "little Jean" farther away still, quite to the water's edge, and they talked long about the marriage which lay so near his heart.

The rising tide drove them toward the fishers, whom they rejoined, and the whole party regained the shore. They aroused Pierre, who pretended to be asleep; and the dinner was long, and moistened with plenty of wine.

VII.

PIERRE DENOUNCES HIS MOTHER.



## VII.

As they returned in the break, all the men, except Jean, were sleepy. Beausire and Roland dropped their heads every five minutes on some neighboring shoulder, which shook them off with a shrug. They drew themselves up, stopped snoring, opened their eyes, and said, "Very fine weather," and then, almost immediately, fell on the other side.

When Havre was reached, their drowsiness was so profound that they could scarcely shake it off ; and Beausire even refused to go

up to Jean's rooms, where tea was waiting them. He was left at his own door.

The young lawyer, for the first time, was going to sleep in his apartments; and he rejoiced, with a somewhat puerile joy, at the opportunity of showing, on this very evening, to the woman he was engaged to, the rooms she would soon occupy.

The servant-girl had gone. Madame Roland had declared that she would boil the water and serve the tea, as she did not like servants to sit up, for fear of fire.

No one except Madame Roland, her son, and the workmen had yet entered the rooms, so that the surprise might be complete when it was seen how pretty they were.

When they entered the vestibule, Jean begged them to wait. He wished to light the candles and lamps; and he left in darkness Madame Rosémilly, his father, and brother, till he exclaimed "Enter!" and threw wide open both of the folding doors.

The glass gallery, lighted by a chandelier, and glass globes of various colors concealed amid the palms, india-rubber trees, and

flowers, seemed at first like a scene in a theatre. There was a pause of admiration, and Roland, marvelling at the luxury, felt a desire to clap his hands as at a transformation scene.



They next entered the first parlor, a small room, hung with old-gold stuffs to match the chairs. The large room for the reception of clients was very simple, of pale salmon color, and had a noble air.

Jean sat down in the arm-chair before his

book-laden desk, and in a grave, rather forced voice, said :

“ Yes, madame, the authorities are explicit, and, with the consent which I have just announced to you, give me absolute assurance, that within three months the affairs of which we have spoken will have a successful solution.”

He looked at Madame Rosémilly, who smiled as she looked at Madame Roland, and Madame Roland took and pressed her hand.

Jean was radiant, and, cutting a schoolboy caper, cried :

“ How well the voice carries ! This room would be excellent to speak in.”

He began to declaim :

“ If humanity alone, if that sentiment of natural sympathy which we feel for all suffering, was to be the ground of the acquittal which we ask from you, we should appeal, gentlemen of the jury, to your pity, to your hearts as fathers and as men ; but we have on our side justice, and it is the question of justice alone that we shall bring before you.”



Pierre looked at the rooms which might have been his, and was irritated at the child's play of his brother, considering him decidedly silly and witless.

Madame Roland opened a door to the right.

"This is the bedroom," she said.

In arranging it, she had lavished all her maternal affection. The hangings were of cretonne in imitation of the old Norman stuff. A Louis Quinze design, a shepherdess in a medallion held by the kissing bills of two doves, gave the walls, curtains, bed, and chairs the gallant air of one of Watteau's *fêtes champêtres*.

"It is charming," cried Madame Rosémilly, who became rather serious as she entered this room.

"Do you like it?" asked Jean.

"Excessively!"

"If you only knew how glad I am!" They exchanged a momentary glance, with confidence and tenderness in the depth of their eyes.

Still she was somewhat put out, somewhat

confused, in this sleeping-room, which was to be her nuptial chamber. She had noticed, on entering, that the bed was very large, a genuine family affair, chosen by Madame Roland, who had without doubt foreseen and desired the approaching marriage of her son ; and this maternal foresight gave her pleasure, for it seemed to say they were expecting her to be one of the family.

When they had returned to the parlor, Jean suddenly opened the door to the left and displayed the round dining-room, with three windows and Japanese decorations. Mother and son had there lavished all the fancy of which they were capable. This room, with its bamboo furniture, images, plaques, gold-embroidered silks, its transparent blinds in which beads of glass seemed drops of water, its fans nailed to the walls to hold up tapestry, its screens, its swords, its masques, its cranes with real feathers, all its little knick-knacks of porcelain, wood, ivory, paper, mother-of-pearl, and bronze, had that pretentious stiff look which awkward hands and ignorant eyes give to things which re-



JEAN'S ROOMS.



quire the highest degree of tact, taste, and artistic education. Yet this room was the most admired. Pierre only took some exceptions, with a rather bitter irony, at which his brother was hurt.

The table was decked with fruits in pyramids, and cakes piled into monuments.

They were hardly to be called hungry. They sucked the fruit, and nibbled at the pastry, rather than eat them ; and then, after the lapse of an hour, Madame Rosémilly demanded permission to retire.

It was resolved that M. Roland should escort her to her door, and he left with her at once ; while Madame Roland, in the absence of the servant, cast a housekeeper's eye over the apartment to see that nothing was wanting.

"Must I come back for you ?" Roland asked.

She replied after some hesitation :

"No, my dear, go to bed. Pierre will bring me home."

When they had departed, she blew out the wax candles, locked up the cakes,

the sugar, and the liquors in a cupboard, the key of which she gave to Jean. Then she passed into the bedroom, turned down the bed, and saw if the carafe was filled with fresh water, and the windows securely closed.

Pierre and Jean remained in the smaller room ; the latter still sore at his brother's criticism on his taste, the former more and more irritated at seeing his brother in these apartments.

They both sat down and smoked without speaking. Suddenly Pierre exclaimed :

“ By George, the widow looked pretty well washed out this evening ; seaside excursions do not suit her.”

Jean felt himself seized at once with one of those sudden and furious fits of wrath which seize good-natured men when wounded to the heart.

His breath failed him, so strong was his emotion, as he stammered out :

“ For the future, do not let me hear you say ‘ the widow ’ when you are speaking of Madame Rosémilly.”

Pierre turned haughtily to him :

“ You are giving me orders, it seems. Are you becoming mad ? ”

Jean drew himself up :

“ I am not becoming mad, but I have had enough of your manners to me.”

Pierre gave a grin.

“ To you ? Are you going to fight Madame Rosémilly’s battles ? ”

“ Madame Rosémilly is going to be my wife ! ”

The other laughed still louder.

“ Ha, ha ! Very good. Now I see why I must not call her ‘ the widow.’ You have, however, taken a very odd way of announcing your marriage to me.”

“ No jesting—I won’t have it. Do you hear ? I won’t have it ! ”

Jean came up to him, pale and with trembling voice, exasperated at the irony with which his brother pursued the woman whom he loved and had chosen.

All at once Pierre became just as furious ; all his impotent wrath, all the bitterness that he had kept down, all the rebellious feelings

he had crushed, and all his silent despair, flew to his head like a congestion of the brain.

“ You dare to talk thus ? You dare ? Be silent, I say ! Those are my orders, mine, do you hear ? Those are mine ! ”

Jean, surprised at this violence, was silent for a few seconds, searching, in that confusion of mind into which rage throws us, for the idea, the phrase, the word which would pierce his brother to the heart.

He struggled to gain the mastery over himself in order to give a better blow ; and speaking slowly, to make his words more cutting, he resumed :

“ It is a long time now since I have known you have been jealous of me ; ever since the day when you began to say ‘ the widow ’ because you knew it annoyed me.”

Pierre burst into one of his usual peals of harsh and insulting laughter.

“ Ha, ha ! My God ! Jealous of you ? Me jealous of you ? Me ! Me ! Good God, why ? For what reason ?—your brains or your looks ? ”



Jean felt that he had touched the wound to the quick.

"Yes. You are jealous of me, jealous since childhood ; and you became uncontrollable when you saw this lady prefer me, while she would have nothing to say to you."

Pierre stammered, so exasperated was he at the supposition :

"Me !—me jealous of you ! On account of that silly doll—that plump little goose !"

Jean saw his blows told, and continued :

"And the day when you tried to outrow me in the *Pearl* ? All that you said in her presence, to show yourself off ? Why, you are dying of jealousy ! When this fortune came to me, you became frantic, you detested me, and showed it in every way. You have made us all miserable. There is not an hour when you do not spit out the bile that is choking you."

Pierre doubled up his hands in rage, and in an irresistible longing to rush at his brother and seize him by the throat.

"Silence, now ! Don't speak of that fortune."

Jean cried :

“Why, jealousy is exuding from every pore of your skin. You cannot say a word to my father, my mother, or me, without letting it burst out. You pretend to despise me, because you are jealous ! You pick quarrels with everybody, because you are jealous ! And now when I am rich, you can contain yourself no longer : you have become venomous, you torture our mother as if it were her fault !”

Pierre recoiled to the mantelpiece, his mouth half open, his eyes dilated, a prey to one of those paroxysms of rage which lead to crime.

He repeated in a lower, panting voice :

“Silence, I say, silence !”

“No ! For a long time I have wanted to tell you what I thought. You have given me an opportunity : so much the worse for you ! There is a woman I love : you know it, and ridicule her in my presence. You drive me to extremity : so much the worse for you ! But I will crush your viper fangs. I will force you to respect me.”

“Respect you—you !”

“Yes, me !”

“Respect you—you ! who have dishonored us all by your greed !

“What do you say ? Say it again ! Say it again !”

“I say one does not accept the fortune of one man when one passes for the son of another.”

Jean remained motionless, without comprehension, dazed at the insinuation of which he had a presentiment.

“What ! You say— Say it once more !”

“I say all the world is chattering, all the world is gossiping, that you are the son of the man who left you his fortune. Well, a decent son does not accept the wealth which dishonors his mother.”

“Pierre—Pierre—Pierre—do you think so ? Is it you—you, who utter such an infamy ?”

“Yes, it is I. Do not you see that I am dying of chagrin for more than a month ; that I pass my nights without sleeping, and my days in hiding myself like a wild beast ; that

I do not know what I am saying or doing, nor what will become of me, so wretched am I, so crazed with shame and grief? for what was at first a surmise is knowledge now."

"Pierre, be silent! Mamma is in the next room. Remember, she may hear us—she does hear us!"

But he had to empty his heart. He told everything, his suspicions, his arguments, his struggles, his conviction, and the story of the portrait that had again disappeared.

He spoke in short, mangled phrases, almost incoherently, like a victim to hallucination.

He seemed to have forgotten Jean, and his mother in the next room. He spoke as if no one heard him, because he had to speak, because he had suffered so much, and had so sternly compressed and closed his wound. It had swelled like a tumor, and the tumor was about to burst and bespatter all around. He began to walk about, as he nearly always did, his eyes fixed before him, gesticulating in a frenzy of despair, with sobs in his throat. With a return of horror of himself, he spoke as if

he would confess his wretchedness and the wretchedness of his family, as if he would have flung his pain to the deaf and invisible air which carried away his words.

Jean, distracted and almost convinced at once by the blind energy of his brother, leaned against the door, behind which he guessed that their mother had heard them.

She could not get out without passing through the parlor. She had not come back : therefore, she dared not.

With a sudden stamp of his foot Pierre cried :

“Ah, what a beast I am to have talked like this !”

And he rushed bareheaded on to the staircase.

The noise of the street door, as it closed with a bang, roused Jean from the deep stupor in which he had sunk. Some seconds passed, seconds longer than some hours, and his soul lay benumbed in the dulness of idiocy. He felt that he must, at once, think and act ; but without even the wish to understand or know or recall his sense, he

delayed out of fear, weakness, and cowardice. He belonged to that race of temporizers who put everything off till to-morrow ; and, when he had to take a resolution on the spot, he still instinctively sought to gain a few moments.

But the profound silence which now surrounded him after the loud exclamations of Pierre, this sudden silence of the walls and the furniture, with the bright gleam of the six candles and two lamps, struck him with such a shock that he longed to run away like his brother.

Then he shook together his thoughts ; he shook together his feelings, and tried to think.

He had never encountered such a difficulty in his life. He was one of the men who let themselves drift like running water. He had been a good scholar in the class-room to avoid punishment, and had finished his legal studies with regularity because his life was calm. Everything in the world appeared to him natural, without otherwise awakening his attention. He loved order, prudence,

and repose by temperament, as his soul had neither crease nor wrinkle ; and he remained in face of this catastrophe, like a man who falls into the water without ever having learned to swim.

At first he attempted to doubt his brother. Had he lied from hatred or from jealousy ?

And yet, how could he have been such a wretch as to speak thus of their mother, if he had not himself been frenzied by despair ? But Jean still heard in his ears, still saw with his eyes, still felt in his nerves, in his inmost flesh, certain words, certain cries of suffering, some intonations and gestures of Pierre, that were so full of anguish as to be irresistible, as irrefutable as certitude.

He was too crushed to make a movement or have a will. His distress became intolerable ; and he felt that, behind the door, was his mother, who had heard all and waited for him.

What was she doing ? Not a movement, not a stir, not a breath, not a sigh, revealed the presence of a human being behind those boards. Had she fled ? But how ? If she

had fled, she must have leaped from the window into the street.

A start of terror seized him so sudden and so imperious that he burst open, rather than opened, the door, and rushed into his bedroom.

It seemed empty. A single candle on the dressing-table lighted it.

Jean dashed to the window; it was fastened, and the shutters closed. He returned and scrutinized with anxious looks all the dark corners. He saw that the bed-curtains were drawn; he ran and opened them. His mother was stretched on the couch, her face buried in the pillow, which, with two clutching hands, she held on her head, in order to hear no more.

At first he thought she was suffocated; then, taking her by the shoulders, he turned her round, without her ever letting go of the pillow which hid her face, and which she bit to stop her cries.

But the touch of this stiffened body and of these clutching arms communicated to him the shock of her unspeakable torture. The



energy and force with which she held, by hands and teeth, the feather pillow over her mouth, her ears, and her eyes, that he might not see her or speak to her, made him divine, by the shock he received, to what point it is possible to suffer. His heart, his simple heart, was torn with pity. He was not a judge, not even a compassionate judge : he was a man full of weakness, and a son full of tenderness. He recalled nothing the other had said, he did not argue, he did not discuss : only he touched with his two hands the inert body of his mother, and, as he could not pull the pillow from her face, he cried, while he kissed her dress :

“Mamma, mamma, my poor mamma ! Look at me !”

She would have seemed lifeless, if an almost imperceptible shiver, a vibration as of a stretched cord, had not quivered through all her limbs. He repeated :

“Mamma, mamma, listen to me. It is not true. I am sure it is not true.”

A spasm of suffocation was followed by sudden sobs in the pillow. Then all her

nerves relaxed, the rigid muscles became pliant, the fingers unclasped and left the pillow, and Jean raised it from her face.

She was quite pale, quite bleached, and from her closed eyelids drops of water were flowing. Throwing his arms around her neck, he kissed her eyes with long kisses of despair, that were moistened with her tears, and kept saying :

"Mamma, dear mamma, I am sure it is not true. Don't cry. I know it is not true."

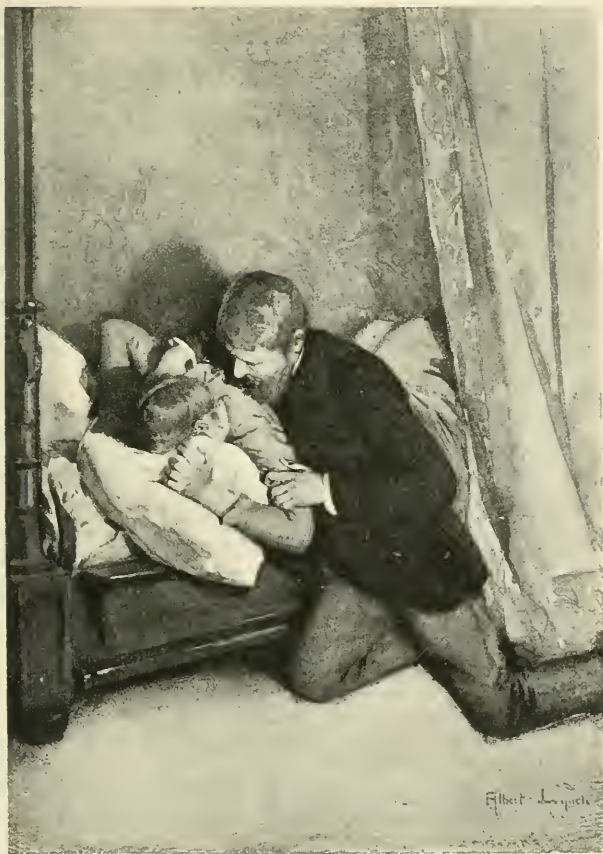
She rose and sat up ; she looked at him, and with one of those efforts of courage which are required, in certain cases, to kill one's self, she said to him :

"No : it is true, my child !"

They remained, without a word, face to face. For some minutes she was still choking, stretching her neck, and throwing back her head to breathe. At length she mastered herself and resumed :

"It is true, my child. Why tell lies ? It is true. You would not believe me if I did lie."

She looked like a madwoman. Overcome with terror, he fell on his knees beside the bed.



THE CONFESSION.



"Oh, be silent, mamma, be silent!"

She rose up with appalling resolution and energy.

"I have nothing more to tell you, my child. Farewell!"

And she walked toward the door. He seized her with both arms, crying :

"What are you doing, mamma? Where are you going?"

"I do not know. How can I know? I have nothing more to do, for I am all alone."

She struggled to escape; and he, still holding her, could find only one word to say, over and over again :

"Mamma, mamma, mamma!"

In the midst of her efforts to break his clasp, she said :

"No, no, I am no more your mother! I am nothing more to you, nor to any one, nothing more, nothing more! You have no longer father or mother, my poor child! Farewell!"

He understood now that if he let her go he would never see her again : so, raising her in his arms, he carried her to an arm-chair, and

forced her to sit there. Then kneeling, and forming a chain around her with his arms, he said :

“ You shall not leave here, mamma. I love you and will keep you. I will keep you always. You are mine ! ”

In a low, weak voice she replied :

“ No, my poor child, that is not possible. This evening you weep : to-morrow you would turn me out. You would not pardon me, either.”

He answered with such a grand burst of sincere love : “ What, I ? How little you know me ! ” that she gave a cry, took his head by the hair with both hands, pulled him violently to her, and kissed him wildly.

Then she remained motionless, her cheek against her son's cheek, feeling through his thick beard the warmth of his young life, and said, low in his ear :

“ No, my little Jean. You would not pardon me to-morrow. You think so, and you are mistaken. You have pardoned me this evening, and that pardon has saved my life ; but you must not see me again.”

He repeated, clasping her tighter :

“Mamma, do not say that !”

“Yes, little one, I must go away. I do not know when, nor how I shall act, nor what I shall say. But it must be so. I would not dare to look at you or embrace you any more. Do you understand ?”

Then in his turn he said, low in her ear :

“Darling mother, you will remain because I wish it, and have need of you. And you must swear to obey me at once.”

“No, my child.”

“O mamma, you must ! Do you hear ? You must !”

“No, my child, it is impossible. It would condemn us all to hell. I know, I have known for a month, what that torture is. You are softened at this moment ; but when it is past, when you look at me as Pierre does, when you recall what I have said to you—Oh, my little Jean—think—think that I am your mother !”

“You must not quit me, mamma. I have only you.”

“But think, my son, we can never see each

other again without blushing, both of us ; without my feeling ready to die of shame, and without your eyes making mine sink."

"This is not true, mamma."

"Yes, yes, yes. It is true ! Oh, I understand all the struggles of your poor brother, all of them, from the first day ! Now, when I hear his step in the house, my heart leaps as if it would burst my breast ; when I hear his voice, I feel as if I would faint. I had you still ! You ! Now I have you no longer. Oh, my little Jean, do you think I could live between you two ?"

"Yes, mamma. I will love you so much that you will not think of it more."

"Oh, if that was possible !"

"It is possible !"

"How can I not think of it, with you and your brother here ? Will neither of you think of it ?"

"I will not, I swear !"

"You will think of it every hour of the day."

"No, I swear, no. And then, listen, if you go away, I'll pick a quarrel and get myself killed."



She was distracted at the childish threat, and clasped Jean fondly, as she caressed him with passionate tenderness.

He continued :

“ I love you more than you think, much more, much more. Come, be reasonable. Try to stop here only a week. Will you promise for a week ? You cannot refuse me that ! ”

She laid her hands on Jean's shoulders, and holding him at arm's length :

“ My child, let us be calm, and not be carried away by affection. Let me speak to you, in the first place. If I should hear, once only, from your lips what I have heard for a month from your brother's mouth ; if I were, once only, to read in your eyes what I read in his ; if I were to surmise, by a mere word, a mere look, that I am as hateful to you as to him—one hour afterwards, you understand, one hour afterwards, I would leave forever.”

“ Mamma, I swear it.”

“ Let me speak. For a month I have suffered all that can be suffered. From the moment when I comprehended that your

brother, my other son, suspected me, and that he was, minute by minute, coming nearer to the truth, every moment of my life has been a torment impossible to describe."

Her voice was so full of anguish that the contagion of her torture brought tears to the eyes of Jean.

He attempted to kiss her, but she repulsed him.

"Leave me alone. Listen—I have so much to tell you to let you understand. But you will not understand—that is, if I should stay—you must— No, I cannot!"

"Speak, mamma, speak!"

"I will, then. At least, I will not have deceived you. You want me to stay with you, do you not? For me to stay, for us to be able to see each other still, to speak to each other, to meet each other all day in the house—for I dare not now open a door for fear of finding your brother behind it—for all this, it is necessary not for you to pardon me—nothing is worse than a pardon—but that you bear me no ill will for what I have done. You must feel yourself so strong, so different

from all the world, as to say you are not the son of Roland without blushing at the avowal and without despising me. I have suffered enough—I have suffered too much. I can bear no more. No, I can bear no more. And I have suffered, not from yesterday, but for a long while.—You will never be able to understand.—That we may still live together, still embrace each other, my little Jean, say to yourself, that, if I was your father's mistress, I was still more his wife, his true wife—there is no shame for it in my heart ; that I regret nothing ; that I still love him, dead as he is, that I shall love him always, that I loved none but him ; that he was all my life, all my joy, all my hope, all my consolation, all, all, all to me, ah, for so long ! Listen, little one. Before God, who hears me, I would have had nothing good in life, if I had not met him—nothing ; never affection, never kindness, never one of those hours that make us so regret that we grow old—nothing ! I owe to him everything. I had only him in the world, and then you two, your brother and you. Without you it would have been void,

black and void as night. I would have loved nothing, known nothing, desired nothing—I would not have even wept ; for I have wept, my little Jean—yes, I have wept since we came here. I gave myself to him, body and soul, forever, with happiness ; and for ten years I was his wife, as he was my husband, before God, who made us for each other. And then I perceived that he loved me less. He was always good and thoughtful, but I was no longer to him what I had been. It was over. Oh, how I wept ! What a wretched deceiver is life ! Nothing lasts !—And we came here, and I never saw him again ; he never came here. He promised in all his letters—I always expected him—and I never saw him again—and now he is dead. But he still loved us, for he thought of you. As for me, I shall love him to my last breath, and will never deny him ; and I love you because you are his child, and I could not be ashamed of him before you. Do you understand ? I could not ! If you wish me to stay, you must accept being his son, and we must talk of him sometimes, and you must

love him a little, and we must think of him when we look at each other. If you will not, if you cannot do this, farewell, my little Jean, it is impossible for us to remain together. I will do as you decide."

Jean replied, in a gentle voice :

"Stay, mamma."

She clasped him in her arms, and began to weep afresh ; then, cheek pressed to cheek, she resumed :

"Yes, but Pierre, what can we do with him ?"

Jean whispered :

"We will find something. You cannot live any longer near him."

The remembrance of her eldest son shook her with anguish.

"No, I cannot, I cannot."

And flinging herself on Jean's heart, she cried in distress of soul :

"Save me from him, save me, little Jean. Do something. I do not know—find—save me !"

"Yes, mamma ; I will see about it."

"At once—you must—at once—do not leave me ! I am in fear of him—such fear !"

“Yes, I will find something, I promise you.”

“But quickly, quickly ! You do not know how I feel when I see him.”

Then she whispered low in his ear :

“Keep me here, at your rooms.”

He hesitated, reflected, and with his positive good sense comprehended the danger of such an arrangement.

But he had to reason for a long time, and to discuss and combat with definite arguments her terror and distraction.

“Only this evening,” she said. “Only to-night. You can tell Roland to-morrow that I was unwell.”

“That is not possible, as Pierre has returned. Come, take courage. I will arrange everything, after to-morrow, I promise you. I will be at the house at nine o’clock. Come, put on your bonnet ; I will take you home.”

“I will do as you wish,” she said with childish resignation, in timid gratitude.

She attempted to rise, but the shock had been too great—she could not yet stand up.

He gave her some *cau sucrée* to drink, and

some salts to smell, and bathed her temples with vinegar.

At length she could walk, and took his arm. Three o'clock was striking when they passed the town hall.

At the door of their dwelling he kissed her and said, "Adieu, mamma. Courage!"

With furtive steps she mounted the silent stairs, reached her room, undressed rapidly, and, with the emotion of her old adulteries revived, crept into the bed where Roland was snoring.

Pierre, alone in the house, was not asleep, and heard her return.







## VIII.

PIERRE RESOLVES TO FLY



## VIII.

ON returning to his room, Jean flung himself on a couch ; for the grief and anxiety which inspired in his brother a longing to run away, and fly like a hunted thing, had a different effect on his somnolent nature, and crippled his every limb. He felt himself weak beyond the power of movement, beyond the power of getting into bed ; weak in body and soul, crushed and desolate. He was not, as Pierre was, smitten in the purity of his filial love, in that secret dignity in which proud spirits wrap themselves : he was over-

whelmed by a stroke of fate, that at the same time menaced his dearest interests.

When at length his mind grew calm, when his thoughts had cleared themselves like water that had been disturbed and troubled, he faced the situation that had just been revealed to him. If he had learned the secret of his birth in any other manner, he would assuredly have been indignant, and experienced deep grief ; but after his quarrel with his brother, and after the violent and brutal revelation that shook his nerves, the poignant emotion of his mother's confession left him without energy to revolt. The shock received by his sensitive nature had been strong enough to sweep away, in irresistible commiseration, all the prejudices and all the sacred susceptibilities of natural morality.

Besides, he was not a man made to resist. He did not like to struggle against any one, still less against himself, and therefore he became resigned ; and then, by an instinctive inclination, an innate love of repose and of quiet, pleasant life, he began to be disquieted about the annoyances which would rise

around him, and at the same time reach him. He saw that they were inevitable ; and, to remove them, he resolved on superhuman efforts of energy and activity. It was necessary that at once, the very next day, the difficulty must be cut ; for he had, likewise, at times, that imperious need of immediate solution which constitutes all the force of the weak, who are incapable of a protracted power to will. His lawyer's turn of mind, trained, besides, to disentangle and study complicated situations and questions of domestic order in disturbed households, at once discovered all the immediate consequences of his brother's state of mind. In spite of himself, he faced the results from a professional point of view, as if he were arranging the future relations of clients after a moral catastrophe.

Beyond question, constant contact with Pierre became impossible. He could easily avoid him by remaining in his rooms, but it was also impossible that their mother should continue to reside under the same roof as her elder son.

His meditations were long, as he lay motionless on the cushions, forming and rejecting plans, without finding anything to satisfy him.

Then suddenly this idea struck him : “Could an honest man keep the fortune he had received ?”

He replied to himself at first, “No,” and resolved to give it to some charity. It was hard : so much the worse. He would sell his furniture, and work like any one else, as all have to work when beginning. This manly and painful determination roused his courage, and he rose and leaned his forehead against the window-pane. He had been poor ; he would be poor again. After all, he would not die of it. He looked at the gas lamp in front of him on the other side of the street. Then, as a belated woman passed along the footpath, he suddenly thought of Madame Rosémilly, and received in his heart the shock of the profound emotions which are engendered in us by a cruel thought. All the desperate consequences of his decision appeared to him at once. He ought to re-

nounce his marriage with her, renounce happiness, renounce everything. Could he do so now that he was engaged to her? She had accepted him with the knowledge that he was rich. If he were poor she would still accept him; but had he the right to ask this from her, and impose on her this sacrifice? Would it not be better to keep this money as a trust, which he would hereafter restore to the indigent?

In his soul, where egotism assumed honest masks, all these disguised interests struggled and fought. His first scruples gave way to ingenious reasonings, then reappeared, and then were again effaced.

He sat down again, searching for some decisive motive, some all-powerful pretext, to fix his hesitations and convince his native integrity. A score of times already had he asked himself the question: "Since I am this man's son; since I know it and accept the situation, is it not natural to accept also his legacy?" This argument, however, could not stifle the "No" whispered by his deepest conscience.

Then he suddenly thought: "Since I am not the son of him whom I thought my father, I can accept nothing from him, neither in his life, nor after his death. That would not be either noble or just ; it would be robbing my brother."

This new manner of looking at it comforted him and quieted his conscience, and he went back to the window.

"Yes," he said to himself, "I must renounce the inheritance of my family. I must leave it whole and entire to Pierre, since I am not the son of his father. That is but just. Is it not just then, also, that I keep the money of my own father?"

Recognizing then that he could not take any share in Roland's fortune, and deciding to abandon it in its integrity, he consented and resigned himself to keep that left by Maréchal; for, if he rejected both, he would find himself reduced to simple beggary.

This delicate affair being once settled, he returned to the question of Pierre's presence in the family. How to get rid of him? He was despairing of finding a practical solution,



when the whistle of a steamer coming into port seemed to reply, by suggesting to him an idea.

Upon this he stretched himself, without



undressing, on his bed, and lay till daylight in broken dreams.

About nine o'clock he went out to ascertain if the execution of his project was possible ; then, after some business matters and calls, he betook himself to the house of his

parents. His mother was waiting for him in her bedroom.

"If you had not come," she said, "I would never have dared to go down."

Roland was soon heard calling on the stairs :

"Nothing to eat to-day, eh? Confound it!"

There was no reply, so he bellowed :

"Josephine, confound it all ! what are you about ? "

The girl's voice came up from the depths of the basement :

"What is it, sir ? "

"Where's your mistress ? "

"She is up-stairs with M. Jean."

He raised his head toward the upper story, and shouted :

"Louise ! "

Madame Roland half opened the door, and replied :

"Well ? "

"Are we to have nothing to eat? Dog-gone it ! "

"We are coming, my dear."

She descended, and Jean followed.

Roland, when he saw the young man, cried :

“ Ah, there you are ! You are already bored with your lodgings.”

“ No, father, but I had to speak with mamma this morning.”

Jean advanced with outstretched hand, and when he felt in his fingers the paternal grasp of the old man, a strange unforeseen emotion wrung him—the emotion of separations and farewells beyond the hope of return.

Madame Roland inquired :

“ Has not Pierre come ? ”

Her husband shrugged his shoulders.

“ No, so much the worse ; he is always late. Let us begin without him.”

She turned to Jean.

“ You ought to go and look for him, my child. It hurts him when we do not wait for him.”

The young man left the room. He mounted the stairs with the feverish resolution of a craven who is going to fight.

He knocked at the door. Pierre replied :

"Come in !"

He entered the room.

His brother was bending over the table and writing.

"Good-morning," said Jean.

Pierre rose.

"Good-morning."

And they shook hands as if nothing had happened.

"Are you not coming down to breakfast ?"

"Well, the fact is, I have a deal to do."

The voice of the older brother trembled, and his anxious eye asked the younger one what he was about to do.

"They're waiting for you."

"Oh, is—is our mother down there ?"

"Yes. She herself sent me to look for you."

"Then I'll come down."

He hesitated at the dining-room door whether he should show himself first. Then he opened it with a jerk, and saw his father and mother seated at table, opposite each other.

He went up to her without raising his eyes



THE MAID-SERVANT.



or pronouncing a word, and bending toward her offered her his brow to kiss as he had been doing for some time past, in place of kissing her on the cheek as in old times. He guessed that her lips approached him, but he did not feel them on his brow, and he straightened himself up with beating heart after this ghost of a kiss.

He asked himself : " What did they say after I left ? "

Jean affectionately repeated the words " mother " and " dear mamma," and paid her great attention, handing her dishes and pouring out her wine. Pierre then comprehended that they had wept together, but he could not penetrate their thoughts. Did Jean believe his mother guilty, or his brother a scoundrel ?

All the reproaches which he had heaped on himself for having uttered the horrible charge assailed him afresh, choking his throat, closing his mouth, and preventing him from eating or speaking.

He was attacked, at this moment, by an intolerable need of flying, quitting the house

which was no longer his, and the people who were bound to him now only by imperceptible bonds. He would have liked to have gone away at once, no matter where ; for he felt all was over—that he could no longer remain among them, that he would torture them always, in spite of himself, by his mere presence, and that they would make him suffer an intolerable punishment.

Jean was talking ; he was in conversation with Roland, but Pierre did not listen or understand it. He fancied, however, that there was a meaning in his brother's tones, and took note of the sense of the words.

Jean said :

“It will be, it seems, the finest boat in their fleet. They say six thousand five hundred tons. It will make its first voyage next month.”

Roland exclaimed in surprise :

“So soon ! I thought she would not be fit to go to sea this summer.”

“Excuse me. The work has been pushed on so vigorously that the first trip will take place before the fall. I was this morning



at the company's office, and spoke to one of the managers."

"Which of them?"

"M. Marchand, a particular friend of the president of the board of directors."

"Why, do you know him?"

"Yes. And I had a slight favor to ask."

"Then you will take me to go over the *Lorraine* when she comes into harbor, won't you?"

"Certainly. Nothing easier."

Jean seemed to hesitate, pick his phrases, and change his subjects inexplicably. He continued:

"In brief, life on board these great Atlantic steamers is very pleasant. More than half of the month is spent ashore in two superb cities, New York and Havre, and the rest afloat with charming people. Very agreeable acquaintances can be made there, and very useful ones, too—very useful later on—among the passengers. Fancy, the captain, if he is economical with his coal, can make twenty-five thousand francs a year, if not more."

"Phew!" exclaimed Roland, with a long whistle that bore witness to a profound respect for the sum and the captain.

Jean resumed :

"The purser can make ten thousand, and the doctor has five thousand, fixed salary, with board, lodging, lights, heat, attendance, etc., etc. This is equal to ten thousand, at least. A good berth."

Pierre, who had raised his eyes, met those of his brother and understood him.

He asked, after a little hesitation :

"Is it difficult to obtain a place as doctor on one of these steamers?"

"Yes and no. It all depends on circumstances and influence."

There was a long silence, then the doctor spoke again :

"Is it next week that the *Lorraine* sails?"

"Yes; the 7th."

They were again silent.

Pierre's thoughts were : It would be certainly a solution of the difficulty if he could go as a doctor on this steamer. Afterwards he would see—he would leave it, perhaps.

Meanwhile, he would earn his living without asking anything from his family. He had been forced, the night before, to sell his watch, for now he asked nothing from his mother. He had, save this, no resource, no means of eating any other bread than that of the house where he was no longer at home, no means of sleeping in another bed and under another roof. So he said, hesitating a little :

“If I could manage it, I should be very glad to sail on board her.”

“Why cannot you ?” asked Jean.

“Because I know no one in the Transatlantic Company.”

Roland, in stupid amazement, asked :

“All your fine projects of success—what’s to become of them ?”

Pierre replied :

“There are times when we must learn to sacrifice everything, and renounce our dearest hopes. Besides, this is only a beginning, a means of amassing a few thousand francs to get a start with.”

The father was soon convinced.

“That’s true. In two years you can lay aside six or seven thousand francs, which, if well laid out, will help you well on.—What do you think, Louise?”

“I think Pierre is right.”

Roland exclaimed :

“I’ll go and speak to M. Poulin, whom I know very well. He is the judge of the Tribunal of Commerce, and is acquainted with the affairs of the company. I know also M. Lenient, the ship-builder, who is a great friend of one of the vice-presidents.”

Jean asked his brother :

“Would you like me to sound M. Marchand to-day?”

“Yes, I would.”

Then, after reflecting for some instants, Pierre resumed :

“The better plan would be, perhaps, to write to my teachers and professors in the medical college, who thought very highly of me. The doctors of these steamboats are often second class. Good strong letters from Professors Mas-Roussel, Rémusot, Flache, and Borriquel would be of more service to me

than any number of doubtful recommendations. It would be only necessary to present these letters through your friend M. Marchand to the board of directors."

Jean expressed his approval.

"A very good idea, very good, indeed ;" and he smiled as if reassured, almost content, and sure of success, for he was incapable of tormenting himself long about anything.

"You will write to them to-day?" he said.

"At once, immediately. I'll go and do it. I won't take any coffee this morning, I am too nervous."

He arose and left the room.

Then Jean turned to his mother :

"Mamma, what are you going to do to-day?"

"Nothing. I do not know."

"Will you come with me to Madame Rosémilly's?"

"Oh, yes, yes!"

"You know that it is a matter of necessity that I go there to-day."

"Yes. That is true."

"But why a matter of necessity?" asked M. Roland, whose custom was never to understand what was said in his presence.

"Because I promised to call there."

"All right. That's different."

And he began to fill his pipe, while the mother and son went up-stairs to get their hats.

When they were in the street, Jean said :

"Will you take my arm, mamma?"

He was not in the habit of offering it to her, for they usually walked side by side. She took it and leaned on him.

For some time they did not speak, then he said :

"You see that Pierre is quite willing to go away."

She replied :

"Poor boy !"

"Poor boy—why so? He will not be so badly off at all when he is on the *Lorraine*."

"No; I know that I am thinking of so many things."

She thought and thought for a long time, with her head bent down, and keeping step

with her son ; and then, with that strange voice which we assume at times to bring to a conclusion a long secret train of thought, she exclaimed :

“ What a mean thing it is, this life of ours ! If we find perchance a moment of happiness in it, it is a sin to abandon one’s self to it, and one has to pay very dear for it afterwards.”

He said in a low tone :

“ Don’t talk of it, mamma.”

“ How can I help talking ? I am thinking of it all the time.”

“ You will forget.”

She was silent once more, and then, with an expression of profound regret, she continued :

“ Oh, how happy I could have been if I had married another man ! ”

At the present moment she was exasperated against Roland, and attributed to his homeliness, his stupidity, his awkwardness, his dullness of soul, to his whole vulgar look, all the responsibility of her fall and her unhappiness. It was this, the vulgarity of the man, that made her be untrue to him, that made

her drive to despair one of her sons, and made her make to the other the most painful confession with which a mother's heart could bleed.

She continued :

“It is frightful for a young girl to marry a husband like mine.”

Jean made no reply. He was thinking of the man whose son he had hitherto believed he was ; and perhaps the confused notion which he had entertained, for some time, of that man's commonplace character, the persistent irony of his brother, the disdainful indifference of others, and even the contempt of the servant-girl for Roland, had prepared his mind for the terrible avowal of his mother. He did not care so much about being the son of another man ; and after the terrible shock of emotion of the day before, if he did not display the revolt, the indignation, and the anger which Madame Roland dreaded, the reason was, that for a long time he had been unconsciously suffering from the feeling of being the child of this stupid lout.



They were now in front of the house of Madame Rosémilly.

She lived on the road to Saint Adresse, on the second floor of a large house belonging to her. The whole roadstead of Havre was visible from the windows.



When she saw Madame Roland, who was the first to enter, instead of extending her hand as usual, she opened her arms and embraced her, for she foresaw the object of her visit.

The furniture of the room, in cut velvet, was always covered ; and on the walls, papered in flower designs, were four engravings bought by her first husband, the captain. They rep-

resented maritime and sentimental scenes. In the first, a fisherman's wife was waving a handkerchief on the shore, while there were disappearing in the horizon the sails of a boat bearing away her husband. In the second, the same woman on her knees, on the same shore, was wringing her hands as she beheld, far away, under a sky full of flashes of lightning, and on a sea of impossible waves, the foundering of her husband's bark.

The two other engravings represented analogous scenes in a higher class of society.

A young fair-haired woman, leaning in revery over the rail of a large packet-boat, just sailing away : she looks at the already distant shore with an eye moistened with regret.

Whom has she left behind her ?

Then the same young woman, seated near a window looking on the ocean, has fainted in an arm-chair ; a letter has just fallen from her lap to the carpet.

He is dead, then ! What despair !

The visitors, generally, were very much touched by the commonplace melancholy of

these transparent and poetic subjects. The whole thing could be understood at once, without research, and they felt pity for these poor women, although they did not exactly know the nature of the sorrow which afflicted the more distinguished of these characters. But this very doubt increased their pensiveness. She must have lost her betrothed. On entering, the eye was inevitably attracted to these four subjects, and kept there, as it were, by fascination. If it wandered from them for a moment, it was only to return to them, and contemplate all the time the four expressions of the two women, who were as like as two sisters. The sharp, well-defined outline, with the air of distinction seen on fashion-plates, and the shining frame, produced a sensation of neatness and order which the rest of the furniture made still more conspicuous.

The chairs were placed in an invariable order, some against the wall, some around the centre-table. The white immaculate curtains had folds so straight and so regular that one would have liked to disarrange them a

little ; and never a single grain of dust tarnished the gilded clock in the style of the Empire, where a globe of the world on the back of a kneeling Atlas seemed to be ripening like a hot-house melon.

The two ladies, as they took their seats, changed a little the normal position of the chairs.

“Have you been out to-day ?” Madame Roland inquired.

“No. I confess I am rather tired.”

And then, as if to thank Jean and his mother, she spoke of all the pleasure she had had in their excursion and their fishing-party.

“Why,” she said, “I ate my prawns this morning. They were delicious. If you like, we will have another excursion some day or other.”

The young man interrupted :

“Before commencing the second, had we not better finish the first ?”

“How is that ? It seems to me it is finished.”

“Ah, madame, for my part, I have landed



THE BETROTHAL.



a fish on the rocks of Saint Jouin, which I want to take home."

She assumed a sly, knowing look.

"You ? What is it ? What did you catch ?"

"A woman ! and we have come, mamma and myself, to ask if she has not changed her mind this morning."

She replied with a smile :

"No, monsieur ; I never change my mind."

He extended to her his hand wide open, and she placed hers in his with an animated gesture ; then he asked :

"As soon as possible, eh ?"

"Whenever you like."

"Six weeks ?"

"'Tis all the same to me. What does my future mother-in-law think ?"

Madame Roland replied, with a somewhat melancholy smile :

"As for me, I say nothing. I only thank you for loving Jean, for you will render him very happy."

"We will do what we can, mamma."

Somewhat touched for the first time, Madame Rosémilly arose, and flinging both

arms around Madame Roland, she gave her a long embrace as though she were a child ; and under the pressure of this new caress a powerful emotion filled the aching heart of the poor woman. She could not say what her feelings were ; they were at once sad and sweet : she lost a son and gained a daughter.

When they had taken their seats again and were face to face, they took each other's hand, and so remained, looking and smiling at each other, while Jean seemed almost forgotten by them.

Then they talked of a lot of things which had to be thought about for the coming marriage, and when all was arranged and decided, Madame Rosémilly appeared suddenly to remember a trifling detail, and asked :

“ You have consulted M. Roland, I suppose ? ”

The same blush at once covered the cheeks of mother and son ; it was the mother who answered.

“ Oh, no ! what is the use of it ? ”

Then she hesitated, for she felt that some explanation was necessary, and continued :



"We do everything without speaking to him about it. It is enough to tell him what we have decided."

Madame Rosémilly was by no means surprised, and smiled ; for she thought it quite natural, as the old gentleman was of little account.

When Madame Roland and her son were again in the street, she said :

"Let us go to your rooms : I should like to rest a while."

She felt herself without shelter, without refuge, and with a horror of her home.

They entered Jean's apartments. As soon as she saw the door shut behind her, she gave a great sigh, as if the very turning of the lock had placed her in security ; then in place of resting herself, as she had intended, she began to open the wardrobes and count the piles of linen, the number of pocket-handkerchiefs and of stockings. She changed the usual order in search of more harmonious arrangements, which gave greater pleasure to her housekeeping eyes ; and when she had disposed of things to her taste, laying napkins,

drawers, and shirts on their several shelves, and dividing all the linen into three chief classes—body linen, house linen, and table linen—she drew back to contemplate her work, and said :

“ Jean, come and see how pretty this is.”

He rose and expressed his admiration for the purpose of gratifying her.

When he had resumed his seat, she suddenly went up to his arm-chair with light step from behind him, and, throwing her right arm around his neck, she kissed him, while she placed on the mantelpiece a little package wrapped in white paper which she held in her other hand.

He asked :

“ What is that ? ”

As she made no reply, he understood, for he recognized the shape of the frame.

“ Give it to me,” he said.

But she pretended not to hear him, and went back toward the wardrobe. He rose eagerly and seized this melancholy relic, and, crossing the room, locked and double-locked it in a drawer of his desk. Then she wiped

away a tear from her eyes with the tips of her fingers, and said with a voice rather tremulous :

“ Now I am going to see if your new servant keeps her kitchen in good order. As she is out just now I can inspect everything.”



IX.

PIERRE'S DEPARTURE.



## IX.

THE letters of recommendation from Professors Mas-Roussel, Rémusot, Flache, and Borriquel, which spoke in most flattering terms of their pupil, Dr. Pierre Roland, were submitted by M. Marchand to the Transatlantic Company, and indorsed by MM. Poulin of the Tribunal of Commerce, Lenient, ship-builder, and Marival, assessor to the mayor of Havre and a great friend of Captain Beausire.

It was ascertained that the surgeon of the *Lorraine* was not yet appointed, and Pierre

had a chance of being nominated in a few days.

The notification of his appointment was given him by the maid Josephine, one morning, as he was finishing his toilet.

His first emotion was that of a prisoner under sentence of death, to whom a commutation of his punishment is communicated, and he immediately felt his suffering assuaged a little by the thought of his departure, and his calm life on board, rocked by the rolling waters, always roaming, always wandering.

He was, at this time, living in his father's house like a stranger, dumb and reserved. Since the evening when he had allowed the shameful secret discovered by him to escape him in presence of his brother, he felt that he had broken the last ties that bound him to his kin. He was torn with remorse at having told it to Jean ; he looked on himself as despicable, mean, and malicious, and yet he felt some comfort in having spoken.

His eyes never met those of his mother or of his brother. The eyes of all had assumed, to avoid meeting each other, a surprising mo-



bility, and tricks like those of enemies who fear to cross each other's path. He was always asking himself : "What can she have said to Jean? Did she confess or deny? What does my brother believe? What does he think of her? What does he think of me?" He could not imagine, and that exasperated him. Besides, he almost never spoke to them, except in Roland's presence, so as to avoid questions.

When he received the letter that announced his nomination, he exhibited it, the same day, to the family. His father, who had a tendency to rejoice over everything, clapped his hands. Jean replied in a serious tone, but with a heart full of joy :

"I congratulate you heartily, for I know there were many applicants. You owe it certainly to the letters from your professors."

His mother bent her head, and in a low tone said

"I am very glad you have succeeded."

After dinner he went to the company's offices, to obtain information about many matters, and asked the name of the surgeon

of the *Ficardie* that was to sail the next day, in order that he might learn from him all the details of his new life, and the novel circumstances he would have to meet.

As Dr. Pirette was on board, he went to the ship, and was received in a little room by a young man with a light beard, who looked like his brother. They had a long conversation.

In the sonorous depths of the huge ship, there was perceptible a confused, ceaseless, immense agitation, in which the fall of goods piled up in the hold was blended with the sound of steps, with voices, with the movement of the derricks hoisting in the cargo, with the whistles of the quartermasters, with the clang of chains dragging on the decks, or wound on the capstan by the hoarse pants of the donkey-engine which set the whole mass of the great ship into slight vibration.

But when Pierre had quitted his colleague and found himself in the street, a new melancholy fell on him, and overshadowed him, like those fogs that, coming from the end of the world, sweep over the sea and bear in

their impalpable density something mysterious and impure, like the pestilential breath of distant and unhealthy shores.

Never, in the hours of his greatest suffer-



ing, had he found himself plunged into such a cesspool of misery. The last rent had been torn; he had no ties any more. In tearing from his heart the roots of all his affections, he had not yet felt that distress as of a lost dog which now suddenly seized him.

It was not merely a moral and torturing pang : it was the wild despair of a shelterless beast, the material anguish of a vagabond creature which had no longer a roof, and which rain, wind, storm, all the brute forces of the world could assail. As he set his foot on the steamer, and entered the little cabin oscillating on the waves, the very flesh of the man who had always slept in a quiet, motionless bed revolted against the insecurity of all his future days. Hitherto he had felt himself protected by the solid walls set in earth which surrounded him, and by the certainty of repose in the same place, under a roof that resisted the winds. Now everything that was a charm in the warmth of a snug room would be a danger and a perpetual suffering.

No ground beneath his feet ; only the sea that heaves, and roars, and engulfs. No space around him, in which to walk, run, lose his road ; only some feet of plank to march on like a criminal in the midst of other prisoners. No trees, gardens, streets, houses ; nothing but water and sky. And then he

would feel, unceasingly, the movement of the ship beneath his feet. In stormy weather he would have to support himself against the cabin-sides, or cling to the doors, or hang on to the edge of his narrow berth, to avoid falling. In calm weather he would notice the whirring quiver of the screw, and feel the rush of the ship that bore him, in its ceaseless, regular, exasperating flight.

He found himself condemned to this life of a wandering convict, solely because his mother had yielded to her lover's caresses.

He walked straight before him, broken, for the moment, by the desolate melancholy of those who are going to expatriate themselves.

He no longer felt in his heart his haughty contempt or disdainful hate of unknown passers-by, but a sad longing to speak to them, to tell them that he was going to quit France, and to be listened to and consoled. In his bosom there was a need, like that of the shame-faced poor man who holds out his hand—a timid yet strong need of feeling that some one was sorry for his departure.

He thought of Marowsko. The old Pole

was the only one who loved him well enough to feel a true, deep emotion, and the doctor resolved to call on him at once.

When he entered the shop, the druggist, who was pounding some powders in the bottom of a marble mortar, gave a slight start and quitted his work.

"We never see you any more now," he said.

The young man explained that he had numerous affairs to look after, without betraying the reason, and took his seat, asking :

"Well, how is business going on?"

Business was not going on. Competition was terrible, sick folks scarce and poor in that workingman's quarter. There was no sale except for cheap medicines, and the doctors did not prescribe those rare and complex remedies that give a profit of five hundred per cent. The old fellow concluded :

"If it lasts three months longer like this, the shop must be shut up. Did I not reckon on you, my dear doctor, I would have turned boot-black already."

Pierre felt his heart contract, and he de-

cided to give the blow abruptly, as it had to be done.

"Oh, me? I cannot be any longer of any aid to you. I leave Havre at the beginning of next month."

Marowsko took off his glasses, so great was his emotion, and cried :

"You—you! What's that you say?"

"I say I am going away, my poor friend."

The old man was prostrated; he felt his last hope crumble; and he took a sudden revulsion against this man, whom he had followed, and loved, and in whom he had such confidence, and who abandoned him in this way.

He stammered out :

"You are not going to betray me in your turn, are you?"

Pierre felt himself so moved that he longed to embrace him.

"I am not betraying you. I cannot find a good place to start in here, and I am going as a doctor on a transatlantic steamer."

"O M. Pierre, you promised so often to help me along in life!"

"What would you have? I must live myself; I have not a sou!"

Marowsko repeated:

"It is wrong, it is wrong—what you are doing. Nothing now for me, but to die of hunger. At my age, it is all over. It is wrong. You abandon a poor old man who came here to be near you. It is wrong."

Pierre wished to explain, give his reasons, and prove that he could not act otherwise. The Pole would not listen, in his indignation at such desertion, and ended by saying, with an allusion, beyond question, to some political events:

"You Frenchmen never keep your promises!"

Pierre then rose, annoyed in turn, and taking a higher tone, said:

"You are unjust, M. Marowsko. It required powerful motives to make me adopt the decision I have made, and you ought to understand that. Good-day. I hope that next time I shall find you more reasonable."

He left the shop.



"Well," he thought, "no one will have a sincere regret for me."

He thought and thought of all those he knew or had known; and, in the midst of all the faces that flitted through his memory, he came at length to that of the girl in the beer-shop, who had made him suspect his mother.

He hesitated, for he nursed an instinctive grudge against her; then, by a sudden change of thought, "She was right, after all," he made his decision, and set out to find the street where she lived.

The beer-shop was, as it happened, full of people and full of smoke. The customers—shopkeepers and workingmen, for it was a holiday—were shouting, laughing, calling out orders; and the landlord himself was serving them, running from table to table, carrying off the empty glasses, and bringing them back full of froth.

When Pierre found a place, not far from the desk, he waited in the hope that the girl would see and recognize him.

She, however, passed and repassed in front

of him, without a glance, trotting about with a little coquettish swing of her petticoats.

He knocked, at last, on the table with a coin. She came up.

“What do you wish, sir?”

She did not look at him; her mind was lost in calculating the glasses that she had served.

“Is that the way to say ‘Good-day’ to one’s friends?” he said.

She turned her eyes on him, and in a tired voice:

“Oh, it is you! You look well. But I have no time to-day. Do you want a beer?”

“Yes, a beer.”

When she brought it, he resumed:

“I came to say good-by; I am going away.”

She replied with indifference:

“Oh, stuff! Where are you going?”

“To America.”

“They say it’s a fine country.”

Not a word more. He must have, indeed, been foolish to speak to her on such a day. There were too many people in the place.

Pierre walked toward the sea. When he

reached the jetty, he saw the *Pearl* returning, with his father and Captain Beausire on board. The sailor, Papagris, was rowing, and the two others, sitting in the stern, smoked their pipes with an air of perfect happiness. As he saw them pass, he thought : "Blessed are the simple in spirit."

He seated himself on one of the benches of the breakwater, to try and benumb himself into a brute-like somnolence.

When he returned home in the evening, his mother, without daring to raise her eyes to him, said :

"You will have a deal to do to get ready for leaving, and I am rather perplexed. I have already ordered your body-linen, and have seen the tailor about your clothes ; but is there nothing else you need, things I do not know about, perhaps?"

He opened his lips to say "No, nothing," but he thought that he must, at least, accept means of dressing decently, and replied, in a very calm tone :

"I do not know yet, myself. I'll ask at the office."

He obtained there a list of indispensable articles. His mother, on receiving it from his hands, looked at him, for the first time since a long while back, and she had in her eyes the humble, soft, sad, appealing look of poor dogs that have been whipped and are begging pardon.

On the 1st of October, the *Lorraine*, sailing from Saint Nazaire, entered the port of Havre, to sail on the 7th of the same month for her destination of New York. Pierre Roland had to take possession of the little floating cabin in which henceforth his life would be imprisoned.

Next day as he was going out he met his mother on the stairs; she was waiting for him, and said in an almost unintelligible voice :

“You do not want me to help you in arranging your things on the boat?”

“No, thanks; everything is complete,” he murmured.

“I want so much to see your cabin.”

“It is not worth the trouble. It is very plain and very small.”



ON THE STAIRCASE.



He went on, leaving her prostrated, leaning against the wall, with her face deadly wan.

Now, Roland, who had visited the *Lorraine* that very same day, talked during dinner of nothing but that magnificent ship, and was much astonished that his wife had no desire to see it, since their son was to sail in it.

During the following days Pierre scarcely lived with his family. He was nervous, irritable, harsh, and his hard language seemed to smite every one. But on the evening before his departure he suddenly appeared much changed and softened. As he was embracing his parents before going to sleep on board for the first time, he asked :

"You will come and say 'Good-by' to me to-morrow, at the ship?"

Roland cried :

"Yes, yes, by Jove ! Won't we, Louise?"

"Certainly," she said in a low voice.

Pierre continued :

"We leave at eleven, sharp. You must be down there at half-past nine, at the latest."

"Hallo !" cried the father : "here's an

idea. When we leave you, we will run as fast as we can and go aboard the *Pearl*, and wait for you outside the jetties, and get another sight of you. Is that a good notion, Louise ?”

“ Yes, decidedly.”

Roland went on :

“ In this way we shall not be lost in the crowd that encumbers the pier when the American boats sail. One can never find one’s friends in the throng. Does that suit you ? ”

“ Oh, yes. Let us arrange it so.”

An hour later Pierre was stretched on his little sailor’s bed, long and narrow as a coffin. He lay a long time with his eyes open, thinking of all that had passed during the last two months in his life, and, above all, in his soul. Through his having suffered and made others suffer, his aggressive and vengeful grief had worn itself out, like a foaming wave. He had scarcely the courage to be angry with any one, or for any cause whatever ; he let his wrath and indignation toss and drift like his life. He felt himself so weary of struggling, weary of smiting, weary of hating, weary



of everything, that he could bear it no longer, and he sought to numb his heart into oblivion, as one falls into sleep. He heard, vaguely, around him the strange sounds of the ship—slight sounds, scarcely perceptible in that calm night in harbor—and he felt, in the wound hitherto so agonizing, only the painful tingling of the cicatrizing scar.

He slept profoundly till the movements of the sailors woke him from his repose. It was daylight, and the tidal train with the passengers from Paris arrived at the quay.

Then he wandered about the ship, among the busy, restless crowd of people looking for their cabins, calling to each other, questioning and answering one another, in all the bewilderment of the beginning of a voyage. After a salute to the captain, and a shake of the hand to his comrade the purser, he entered the cabin, where some Englishmen were already dozing in the corners. The large room, with its walls of white marble framed in gold bands, prolonged endlessly in the mirrors the view of its long tables flanked by two unlimited lines of revolving

chairs, in pomegranate-colored velvet. This then was the vast floating cosmopolitan hall, where the rich people of every continent had to dine in common. Its opulent luxury was that of large hotels, theatres, public places—a luxury that was commonplace and self-asserting, which satisfied the eyes of millionnaires. The doctor was about to pass into the part of the ship reserved for the second class, when he remembered that on the previous evening a great herd of emigrants had embarked: so he went to the 'tween decks. When he entered there, he was struck by a nauseating stench of poor dirty humanity; the stink of naked flesh, more sickening than that of the hair or wool of beasts. There, in a sort of low, dark tunnel, like the galleries in mines, he saw hundreds of men, women, and children stretched on planks, tier above tier, or grovelling in heaps on the floor. He could not distinguish faces, but he dimly saw this filthy crowd in rags, this crowd of wretches conquered in life, squeezed out, crushed down—he saw it starting with a skinny wife and emaciated children, for an

unknown country, where they hoped not to die of hunger, perhaps.

As he thought of the past toil, the wasted toil, the barren efforts, the bitter strife renewed each day in vain, the energy displayed by these beggars who were going to begin again, they did not know where, this life of horrible wretchedness, the doctor felt a desire to cry out to them, "Dump yourselves into the sea, with your women and your brats!" and his heart was so wrung by pity that he fled, unable to bear the sight.

His father, his mother, his brother, and Madame Rosémilly were already waiting for him in his cabin.

"So soon?" he said.

"Yes," replied Madame Roland with a trembling voice; "we wished to have time to see you a little."

He looked at her. She was in black as if in mourning, and he suddenly perceived that her hair, that was merely gray the month before, had now become quite white.

He could with difficulty seat the four visitors in his little room, and he himself jumped

on his bed. The door was left open, and through it was seen a crowd as numerous as that in a street on a holiday; for all the friends of the passengers, and an army of mere sightseers, had invaded the huge packet-ship. They walked along the passages, through the salons, everywhere, and some heads were poked into the room, while voices outside muttered, "That's the doctor's room."

Then Pierre closed the door; but when he found himself shut up with his friends he longed to open it again, for the movement on the ship outside concealed from them their constraint and their silence.

At length Madame Rosémilly determined to speak.

"Very little air comes through these small windows."

"It is a dead light," said Pierre.

He pointed out the thickness that rendered the glass capable of resisting the most violent shocks, and then he explained at length the method of closing it. Roland next asked :

"Do you keep your medicines here?"

The doctor opened a locker, and let them see a row of phials that bore Latin names on squares of white paper.

He took one of them and enumerated the properties of the matter it contained ; then a second, then a third, and delivered a lecture on therapeutics which seemed to be listened to with great attention.

Roland shook his head, repeating :

“ Is it not interesting ? ”

A gentle knock at the door was heard.

“ Come in,” cried Pierre.

And Captain Beausire appeared.

He said, as he held out his hand :

“ I am late in coming, because I did not want to cause any constraint.”

He, too, had to sit on the bed. Then the silence recommenced.

Suddenly, however, Captain Beausire pricked up his ear. Some order had reached him through the partition, and he announced :

“ It is time for us to go if we want to get on board the *Pearl* and see you again as you come out, and say ‘ Good-by ’ in the open sea.”

Roland made a great point of doing this, doubtless with a view to impress the passengers on the *Lorraine*, and rose hurriedly.

"Come, good-by, my boy."

He kissed Pierre's mustaches, and then opened the door.

Madame Roland did not stir, and remained with downcast eyes and very pale face.

Her husband touched her on the arm.

"Come, let us be off. We have not a moment to lose."

She stood up, took a step toward her son, and held out to him, one after the other, two cheeks as white as wax, which he kissed without saying a word. Then he shook Madame Rosémilly's hand, and his brother's, asking him :

"When is the wedding to be?"

"I do not yet know precisely. We will make it dovetail in with one of your voyages."

Finally they all left the room, and went up to the deck, which was encumbered with the public and porters and sailors.

The steam was roaring in the enormous

belly of the ship, which seemed to snort with impatience.

"Good-by," said Roland, still in a hurry.

"Good-by," replied Pierre, standing on the edge of one of the little wooden gangways that led from the *Lorraine* to the quay.

He again shook all their hands, and his family departed.

"Quick, quick, into the carriage!" cried old Roland.

A cab was waiting for them, and took them to the outer harbor, where Papagris had the *Pearl* all ready to put off.

There was not a breath of air; it was one of those calm, dry days of autumn, when the smooth sea seems cold and hard as steel.

Jean seized an oar, the sailor flung the other into the rowlocks, and they began to row. On the breakwaters, the jetties, even on the granite parapets, there was an innumerable crowd, jostling and noisy, that waited for the *Lorraine*.

The *Pearl* passed between these two bil-

lows of humanity, and was soon outside the mole.

Captain Beausire, seated between the two ladies, held the tiller, and said :

“ You will see that we shall be directly in her course, down there.”

The two rowers pulled with all their might to get out as far as possible. All at once Roland exclaimed :

“ Here she is ! I see her rigging and her two chimneys. She is coming out of the basin.”

“ Pull, boys,” repeated Beausire.

Madame Roland took her handkerchief from her pocket and held it to her eyes.

Roland was standing up and clinging to the mast.

“ Now she is swinging into the outer harbor. She does not stir. She is in motion again. She has to take a tug. She is off ! Hurrah ! She is between the jetties. Don’t you hear the people cheering her ? It is the *Neptune* that is towing her—I saw her bow just now. There it is—there it is ! My God, what a ship ! My God, just look ! ”



Madame Rosémilly and Beausire turned round ; the two men ceased to row ; Madame Roland alone was motionless.

The huge packet-ship, towed by a powerful tugboat, which looked like a caterpillar before her, came slowly and royally out of harbor. The good folk of Havre, massed on the moles, the beach, and at the windows, were suddenly seized with patriotic zeal, and cried, "Hurrah for the *Lorraine!*" acclaiming and applauding her stately departure—this childbirth by a great maritime city, that gave to the sea her fairest child.

But she, when she had cleared the narrow passage enclosed between the two granite walls, at length found herself free, and, casting off her tug, started alone, like some huge monster racing over the water.

"Here she is! Here she is!" Roland kept crying. "She is coming straight on us."

Beausire, radiant with delight, repeated :

"Did not I tell you so? Eh? Don't I know their course?"

Jean, in a low voice, whispered to his mother :

“Mamma, look—she is coming.”

Madame Roland uncovered her eyes, that were blinded with her tears.

On came the *Lorraine*, at full speed after clearing the harbor, in the clear, calm, fine weather. Beausire, with his glass levelled, cried :

“Attention ! M. Pierre is at the stern, all alone, well in sight. Attention !”

The *Lorraine*, high as a mountain, swift as a train, passed the *Pearl* almost within touching distance.

Madame Roland, distracted and heart-broken, stretched out her arms toward the ship, and saw her son, her son Pierre, with his gold-laced cap, fling to her with both hands his farewell kisses.

But he went away in the distance, vanished, disappeared ; he already seemed quite small, effaced like an imperceptible spot on the gigantic vessel. She tried to distinguish him still, and could not recognize him.

Jean took her hand.



THE FAREWELL.



"You saw him?" he said.

"Yes, I saw him. How good he is!"

They turned their course back to the city.

"By Jove, she goes fast!" M. Roland declared with enthusiastic conviction.

The packet-boat, indeed, diminished moment by moment, as if melted into the ocean. Madame Roland turned her eyes to it, and saw it plunge into the horizon toward an unknown country at the other end of the world. On that ship which nothing could stop, on that ship which soon she would no longer see, was her son, her poor son. And it seemed to her that half of her heart went with him; it seemed to her, also, as if her life was ended; it seemed to her that never more again would she behold her child.

"Why are you crying?" asked her husband. "He will be back in less than a month."

She sobbed out:

"I do not know. I cry because I am not well."

When they returned to land, Beausire quitted them at once to go and breakfast

with a friend. Jean went on in front with Madame Rosémilly, and Roland said to his wife :

“ He has a good figure, all the same, our Jean.”

“ Yes,” replied the mother.

And, as she was too troubled in mind to think of what she was saying, she added :

“ I am very glad he is going to marry Madame Rosémilly.”

M. Roland was stupefied.

“ Oh, stuff ! What ? He is going to marry Madame Rosémilly ? ”

“ Yes. We counted on asking your opinion this very day.”

“ Well, well ! Is it long since this affair has been on hand ? ”

“ No ; only a few days. Jean wished to be sure of being accepted by her before consulting you.”

Roland rubbed his hands.

“ Excellent, excellent. Nothing could be better. I approve of it decidedly.”

As they were about quitting the quay and taking the Boulevard François I., his wife

turned once more to cast a last look at the open sea ; but she saw nothing but a little gray trail of smoke, so distant, so slight, that it had the appearance of a wreath of mist.







# LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS.

---

THE STERN OF THE <i>Pearl</i> , . . . . .	FRONTISPIECE
BASKET OF FISH, . . . . .	PAGE 5
CAPE LA HÈVE, . . . . .	" 13
LANDING FROM THE <i>Pearl</i> , . . . . .	" 25
THE READING OF THE WILL, . . . . .	" 41
THE HARBOR AT THE GRAND QUAY, . . . . .	" 53
PIERRE ON THE JETTY, . . . . .	" 59
THE SEMAPHORE ON THE JETTY, . . . . .	" 69
THE PUBLIC GARDEN, . . . . .	" 83

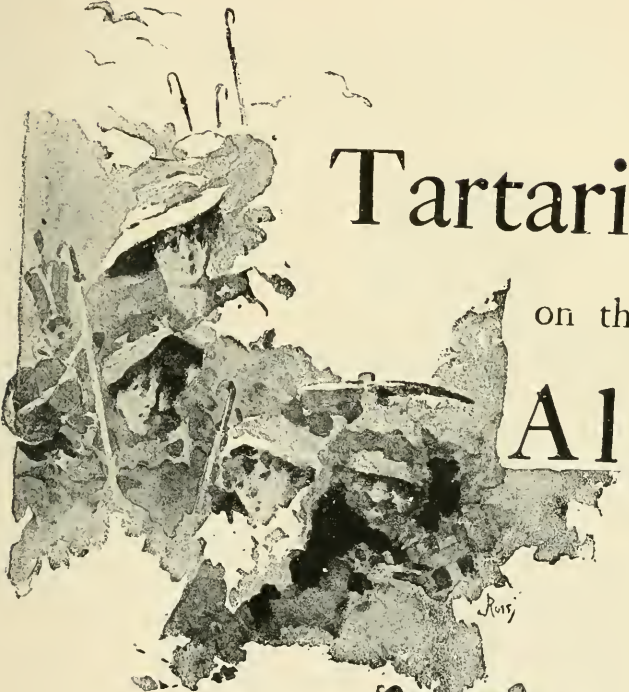
THE BEER-HOUSE, . . . . .	PAGE	89
MADAME ROSÉMILLY'S TOAST, . . . . .	"	107
IN THE ROADSTEAD, . . . . .	"	111
THE <i>Pearl</i> GOING TO SEA, . . . . .	"	121
THE JEWELLER'S SHOP, . . . . .	"	127
IN THE NIGHT, . . . . .	"	145
THE LIGHT ON THE JETTY, . . . . .	"	150
THE LIKENESS, . . . . .	"	161
TROUVILLE, . . . . .	"	169
AT TROUVILLE, ON THE BEACH, . . . . .	"	173
THE PARASOLS AT TROUVILLE, . . . . .	"	188
EXCURSION TO SAINT JOUIN, . . . . .	"	199
LOW WATER, . . . . .	"	203
LOOKING FOR PRAWNS, . . . . .	"	215
NETS AND BASKETS, . . . . .	"	225
SEA VIEW FROM SAINTE-ADRESSE, . . . . .	"	231
JEAN'S ROOMS, . . . . .	"	235
THE CONFESSION, . . . . .	"	251
A CORNER OF THE HARBOR, . . . . .	"	263
THE BASIN FOR THE AMERICAN LINERS, . . . . .	"	273
THE MAID SERVANT, . . . . .	"	277

*List of Illustrations.* 339

A CORNER OF SAINTE-ADRESSE, . . . .	PAGE 289
THE BETROTHAL, . . . . .	“ 293
THE <i>Lorraine</i> LEAVING PORT, . . . .	“ 307
ON THE STAIRCASE, . . . . .	“ 317
THE FAREWELL, . . . . .	“ 331
THE OPEN SEA, . . . . .	“ 335



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# Tartarin

on the

# Alps

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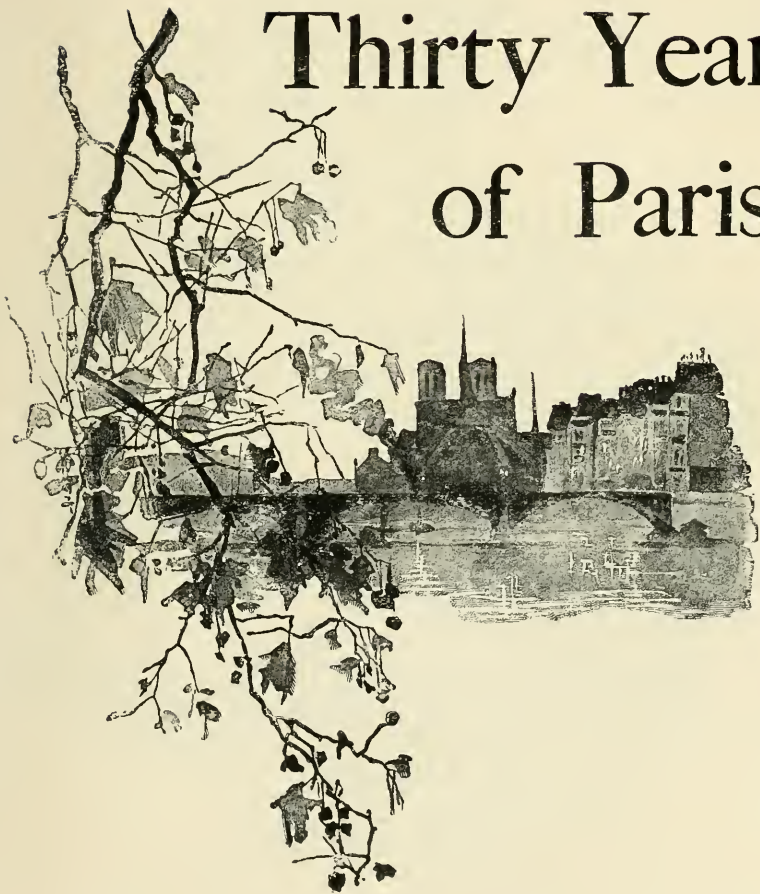
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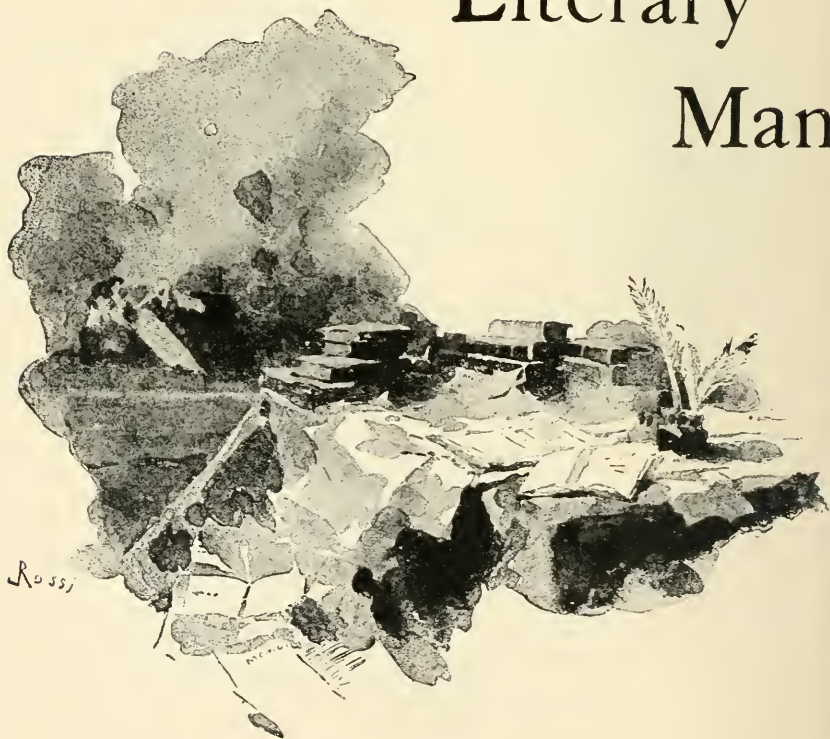
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GUILLAUME ET C<sup>ie</sup>

228 BOULEVARD D'ENFER 228

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---

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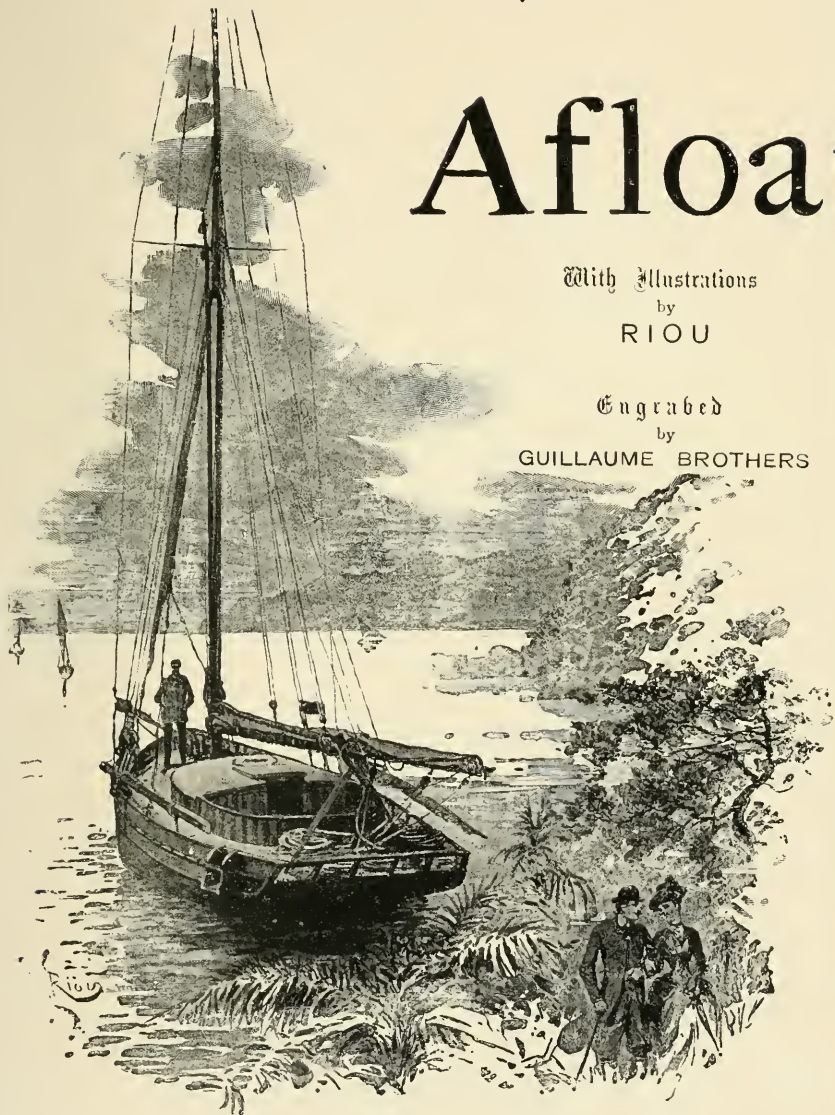
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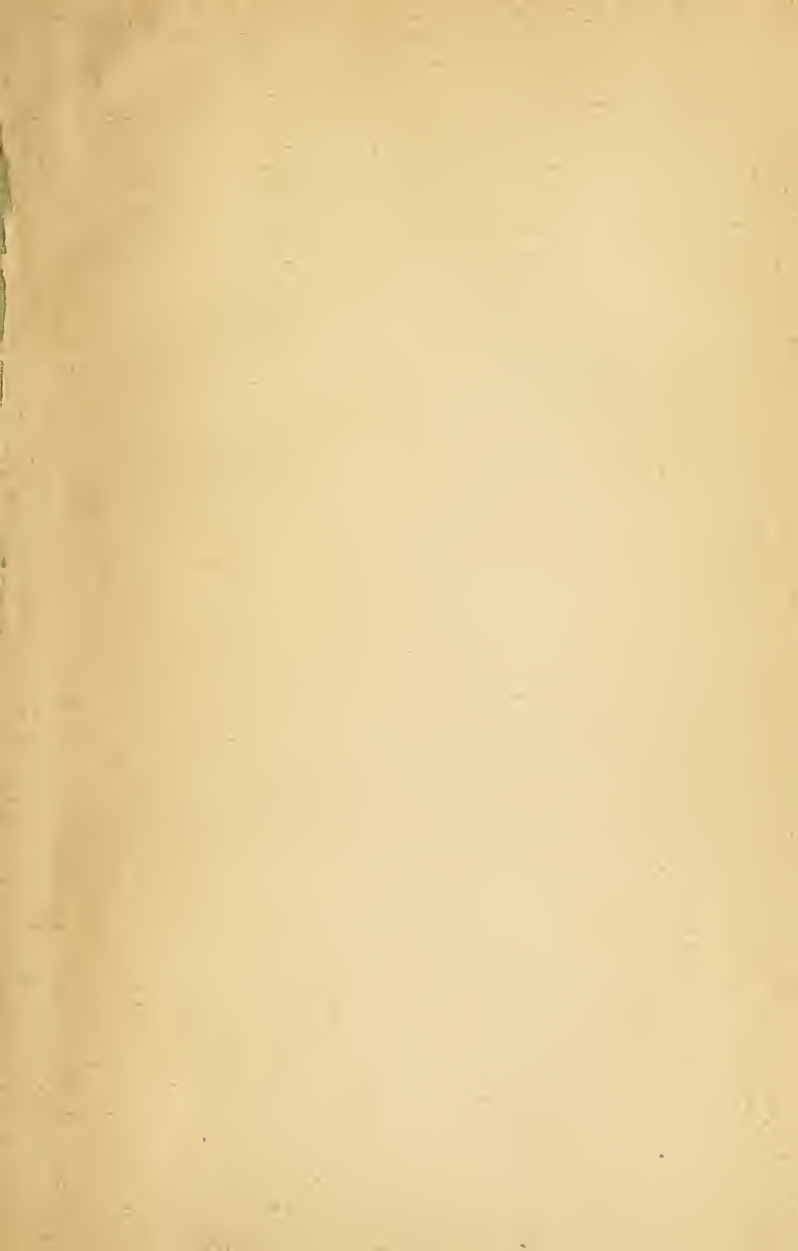


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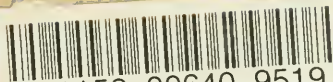
1. Aesop's Fables.
2. Adela Cathcart. Macdonald.
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9. Chicot the Jester. Dumas.
10. Conspirators. Dumas.
11. Countess de Charny. Dumas.
12. Cromwell, Oliver. Carlyle.
13. David Elginbrod. Macdonald.
14. Diary of a Physician. Warren.
15. Don Juan. Byron.
16. Forty-Five Guardsmen. Dumas.
17. Grimm's Fairy Tales.
18. Gulliver's Travels.
19. Harry Lorrequer. Lever.
20. History of a Crime. Hugo.
21. Lamb's Tales from Shakespeare.
22. Malcolm. Macdonald.
23. Marguerite de Valois. Dumas.
24. Memoirs of a Physician. Dumas.
25. Mysteries of Paris. Sue.
26. Mysteries of Udolpho. Radcliffe.
27. Ninety-Three. Hugo.
28. Notre Dame. Hugo.
29. Phantastes; The Portent. Macdonald.
30. Pierre and Jean. Maupassant.
31. Pilgrim's Progress. Bunyan.
32. Queen's Necklace. Dumas.
33. Regent's Daughter. Dumas.
34. Robinson Crusoe.
35. Robin Hood, Life of. Marsh.
36. Rory O'More. Lover.
37. Swiss Family Robinson.
38. Sylvester Sound. Cockton.
39. Taking the Bastile. Dumas.
40. Tales of a Grandfather. Scott.
41. Tennyson's Poems.
42. Thomas Wingfold. Macdonald.
43. Toilers of the Sea. Hugo.
44. Twenty Years After. Dumas.
45. Two Dianas; Page Duke of Savoy. Dumas.
46. Valentine Vox. Cockton.
47. Vidocq, the French Police Spy.
48. Wilfrid Cumberland. Macdonald.
49. Wood's Natural History.
50. Young Colonists. Henty.











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